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Melanie opens school, to publish book of quotes

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Gov't allows import of 10M kilos of chicken

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Coaches blast sloppy PBA officiating

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Patay na ba ang LDP?

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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3 actors in Top 12 of senatorial race

By Blanche S. Rivera

THREE actors, all first-time holders of a national elective post, will likely be in the Senate for the 13th Congress as the Commission on Elections finished canvassing 171 of 176 certificates of canvass (COCs) from all over the country yesterday.

LAWYERS / A22

Winning Isabela candidate tells followers: Stay calm

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ILAGAN, Isabela—Winning gubernatorial candidate Ma. Grecia Cielo Padaca has asked her supporters to remain calm following the decision of the Commission on Elections to suspend her proclamation on Saturday night.

STANDOFF / A22

ELEKSYON 2004
CONGRESS TALLY

CONGRESS	VOTES
1. [illegible], Ilse	16,346,654
2. [illegible], Rene	14,644,100
3. [illegible], Bong	13,955,367
4. [illegible], Jinky	12,818,321
5. [illegible], Roland	12,612,198
6. [illegible], Ed	11,862,760
7. [illegible], Mitos	11,811,636
8. [illegible], Ilse	11,767,987
9. [illegible], Jose Prospero	10,439,511
10. [illegible], Lito	10,374,018
11. [illegible], Jinggoy	10,306,758
12. [illegible], Rodolfo	10,022,000
13. [illegible], Noynoy	9,836,398
14. [illegible], Dominic	9,266,943
15. [illegible], Jolo	8,958,817
16. [illegible], Dakila	7,891,788
17. [illegible], Rafael	6,972,671
18. [illegible], Rudy	6,885,268
19. [illegible], Francisco	6,835,886
20. [illegible], Edgardo	6,830,018

Congress divided on how to count

Opposition wants plenary, not committee, to do tally

By Christine O. Avendaño, Carlos Pilido and Christian Esguerra

CONGRESS is set to convene today as the National Board of Canvassers for the presidential and vice presidential candidates, but it is divided over how to go about counting the votes.

With 4 Cabinet results from 176 certificates of canvass (CoCs) on a joint committee or in a plenary?

Opposition lawmakers said the canvassing to be done by Congress is plenary session, while administration lawmakers are pushing for canvassing by a 24-member joint committee.

The canvassing of the CoCs will be conducted at the House of Representatives in Quezon City from Monday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"Congress is now prepared to complete and do its constitutional mandate as the National Board of Canvassers and proclaim the winners ... before June 30," Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said.

At least 600 fully armed senior police officers will be assigned to the Batasan complex where an unbelievable flood of farmer and supporters of actor Fernando Poe Jr. plans to set up camp to encounter the canvassing.

Hundreds of other police officers will be deployed on Elliptical Road, Commonwealth Avenue and San Mateo Bridge in Marikina City near the Batasan complex, according to police officials.

Pro-administration leaders of Congress are confident that their colleagues will adopt a proposed set of rules that would create a committee joint committee that will canvass the votes.

Leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives will hold their respective caucuses today to present to their members the proposal that some opposition members plan to ask for a Republic "not being considered feasible."

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara said

CONGRESS / A12

OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN
A girl examines her face as she slides a peso coin in her mouth without using her hands during a game held in celebration of the Feast of St. Rita de Casia in Bacolor, Pampanga City.

Bishop warns of very difficult days ahead

By Blanche S. Rivera and Ed C. Catapangan Jr.

IN THE strongest salvo yet from the Catholic Church, Archbishop Oscar Cruz and members President Macapagal-Arroyo would find a hard to govern because doubts on the honesty of the May 10 elections would always haunt her.

"It will be very, very difficult days ahead of us," the outspoken former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) told the Inquirer.

"It's easy to say one can do, but realities will be hard."

Peripatetic Archbishop made the remarks in a phone interview on the eve of a joint session of Congress, which will canvass the results of the presidential election and proclaim the winner.

Archbishop Fr. R.O. Evidente of Bagbaguinbayan Filipino (ERP) has accused the administration of rigging the vote to ensure a Macapagal victory

BISHOP / A12

Let legal processes decide election standoff

By Armando Doronila

CONGRESS, which begins today the canvassed certificates of votes in the presidential election, faces a standoff that threatens to drive the presidential contest away from the electoral arena.

ANALYSIS

The underlying issue being resolved by the canvass is not whether President Macapagal-Arroyo or her chosen opponent, Fernando Poe Jr., won the election, but, more profoundly, whether the legal political process will be allowed to decide the conflict.

The contest starts two weeks after the May 10 presidential election, and there's another long interval of uncertainty before the results are officially determined. The interlude has been fueling tensions, with the lead changing hands several times based on the unofficial and independent quick count by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

The late canvass has made the election a national embarrassment in Southeast Asia's oldest democracy. The delay disrupts economic activity as quick decisions, unlike in election results in India, the world's largest democracy, which held its

ANALYSIS / A12

PNP execs say recruitment on for Edsa-like uprising

By Christian V. Esguerra, Christine O. Avendaño and Carlos Pilido

IF IT CAN, you can note, so why not coin another Edsa-like word?

Two high-ranking police officials yesterday said recruitment had begun to key seven nationwide for an "Edsa-like uprising" by followers of Fernando Poe Jr. to contest the proclamation of President Macapagal-Arroyo as the winner of the May 10 presidential election.

As much as PNP is being dangled to residents in squatter areas in Metro Manila, such as the Batasan compound in Quezon City, where Poe's home is, according to one of the officers, citing a police intelligence update.

The mission would be doubled in case the rallies fell on a rainy day, one of the officers claimed.

"The people behind the plan are spending this much probable because the intention is extraordinary—they're trying to prevent anybody's proclamation but that of FPJ," he told the Inquirer on condition of anonymity.

"The administration's mind is very public," Bonifacio ng Bagbaguinbayan Filipino (ERP) presidential candidate Francisco S. Tatad said, chuckling on hearing the report.

"I am not unmindful of any protest rallies being planned. What I know of is the people's right of Congress," Tatad said. "We had not paid anyone during our 90-day campaign and I dont think anyone of us has more resources now compared to when we started."

There was no explanation from the Philippine National Police on why, despite the supposed opposition plan for an Edsa-type action, its force remained on

PNP / A12

Cebu leaders tell FPJ: Don't be ridiculous

By Johnas B. Bolanboi
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Much is

Opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. leaned some very ridiculous when he claimed there was massive election fraud here.

"Ridiculous ito sa akin," Abellana-governor on Saturday in the aftermath of the filing of Pagbaguinbayan Filipino's election protest.

CEBU / A22

WINNING successful candidate Fio Capistrano shows off her lucky charm.

Gold locket holds Pia's 2 reasons for Senate bid

By Cathy S. Babao-Cabalfin
Lifestyle Editor

AROUND PIA Cayetano's neck hangs a white gold chain that she never parts with. It has a unique locket.

In a recent magazine interview, Pia politely refused the press an invitation to her and gently held on to the one she keeps close to her heart. Upon closer inspection, one sees that a leaf motif character—a round white-gold locket embossed with a sketch of Gabriel, Pia's eldest son who died in September 2001, and her father, the late Sen. Rene Cayetano, and next to it, a silver miniature baby's bootie.

LIFESTYLE / A22

WEATHER FORECAST

Ex-PSE chair sees years of plenty

By Tonyet Ovejas
PEX General Assignment Desk

CLARE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—A former top official of the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday predicted that the next six years would be abundant years for the local stock market.

"There is no other way to go but up. That's why I really predict that the next six years will be years of abundance. It is time for us to recover, to go up," said former PSE president Jose Luis Yulo Jr.

Yulo based his positive outlook on the local business to the relaxed adopted by the PSE and the political stability achieved to be having a president with a full six-year term.

"Hopefully with no more politics, the next six years, I feel, will become years of abundance for us," Yulo told the sixth general membership meeting of the Pampanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Clark on Thursday.

Asked to comment on how allegations of massive fraud in the recently held elections would affect the economy, Yulo replied, "We even voted half-a-yes the next six years will be years of abundance."

An international team which observed the conduct of the recent elections had registered shock at the massive cheating, fraud and killings which accented the polls.

Latest count

Based on the latest unofficial count of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections, President Macapagal-Arroyo was leading her chief rival, Fernando Poe Jr. by a little over 700,000 votes. But with 42.4 percent of the total precincts tallied, Poe was ahead of Ms Macapagal in nine out of 17 regions.

Both lawyers were claiming victory in the elections.

Meanwhile, while still cautious it's quick count today still has to tally at least 12 million votes, mostly from Mindanao and Luzon, which are considered Poe's bailiwicks.

Sky investors

Yulo acknowledged, however, that foreign investors had shied away from the Philippines because the boomers of other Asian countries were now more attractive. "Like China for example."

But Yulo also hopes that the economy of China will recover any up as well, assuming they will be lifted to the bottom and down they will look to the Philippines again. And since our index is already at the lowest level, it cannot go down any lower," he said.

Needed changes

Yulo said one of the changes needed to boost the stock market is the "restoration of the ability of the Filipinos to buy top equitable offerings (IPOs) which are still successfully subscribed."

He also noted that under nearly 70 percent of the population is in the E5 and D areas directly or indirectly own shares through mutual funds, out were can percent of Filipinos own equity owners.

2 to 3 years

At the weekend, Malacañang reminded admitted that it would take at least two to three years of steady economic growth before its effects are felt by the masses.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye also downplayed the effect of the political headlines on the gains made in the economic front.

The country's economy, as measured by gross domestic product, grew by five percent in the first quarter this year or substantially higher than its target of 4.1 percent for the entire period.

However, in an interview with DZRH radio, Bunye said that losing robust economic growth in one quarter would not be sufficient for each Filipino to enjoy the country's economic gains.

"Only through sustained growth over two or three years can the economic gains trickle down to the masses," Bunye said.

On the right track

He said the first quarter's GDP growth in the first quarter only showed that the country was on the right track, specifically in its agriculture modernization policy which boosted the sector's production during the period.

"What is important is that we continue in our economic management and that we give emphasis to the control costs," Bunye said.

Bunye also expressed optimism that the country's economic gains would not be effected by the latest political situation arising from allegations of fraud during the elections, assurances to investment made by an American think tank headed by former US Ambassador to the Philippines Stephen Bosworth.

The New York-based Council of Foreign Relations Center for Preventive Action assured that the country's modest economic gains could go down the drain if the election process would not be completed to an expeditious and credible manner. With a report from GILC, Cabacungan Jr.

Defensor cuts short US trip due to 'problems'

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENTIAL anti-graft spokesperson Michael Defensor will cut short his San Francisco vacation because of unforeseen problems in the canvassing of national election results.

In a phone interview with reporters, Defensor (who left for the US with his family on Friday) said he was asked by his peers in the Cabinet to return immediately because of a "developing situation" with the midterm results which he planned his post-campaign trip. He had planned to be away for no more than a week.

Not anticipated

Defensor said he didn't anticipate the opposition's reported campaign to discredit the election results and their plan to hold a rally to proclaim their standard-bearer.

"I thought we wouldn't have problems since the canvassing started and the Congress would just go through the motions," said Defensor, adding that in 1998, as truck commander only three days separate him from Joseph Estrada as president.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that the broadcaster had given their word that they would stick to the timetables.

Faith in Congress

"We are putting a lot of faith on the declaration of both chambers of Congress. The process will continue even in spite of fraud. There will be a proclamation as scheduled," Bunye said in a phone interview.

He, however, did not share Speaker Jose de Venecia's optimism that the National Board of Canvassers would wrap up its work in seven days. "That's too optimistic," Bunye said.

As the nation's attention starts to shift, Malacañang also commended the Movement for Free Elections.

All their volunteers were well-meaning and tried their best to put an end to cases of fraud the election results," Bunye said in an interview with DZRH radio.

He added that it was impossible for Smartbrod to come out with dominated results because its data were verified before they were released to quick count.

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RP gov't respects human rights, Albert tells US

By Jerome Aning

[UPDATE] "some problems," respect for human rights remains a key element to government in the Philippines, Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert said yesterday.

Albert made the statement in response to the US State Department's annual report "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The US Record 2003 - 2004," which also accused the country that Manila had been taking to promote human rights, particularly in the context of cooperation with the United States.

"The divergences on these efforts are relatively few. The main concerns in the report which said there are problems in some areas cannot change the fact that the Philippine government has been actively promoting human rights," Albert said.

Acknowledgement

She acknowledged that there were isolated reports of human rights abuses, but that "as the President has stated, these are investigated with fairness, transparency and despatch."

The Secretary pointed out that the State Department report was compiled primarily as a report of the actions taken by Washington to promote human rights through technical and other forms of assistance.

Serious problems

The report, released May 17, said the Philippine government "generally respected the human rights of its citizens." However it said, there were "serious problems in some areas."

Among these were the continued unsatisfactory performance in extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture and arbitrary arrest and detention, and incidence of physical abuse of suspects and detainees.

Other problems included widespread corruption in the police system and prison facilities.

The report detailed efforts undertaken by the US Embassy in Manila to promote human rights, particularly among Philippine military, police, civil management, immigration, labor and judicial personnel.

8 Moro rebels surrender

By Christine Esguerra

[UPDATE] members of the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) based on the Lanao Peninsula have surrendered to the Philippine Army, the military announced yesterday.

Led by Ernesto "Mohammad" Salida, the group also included six females, a lieutenant, grenade and rifle ammunition, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, chief Public Affairs Office of the Philippine Infantry Division.

Salida and company were later brought to the headquarters of the 4th Infantry Battalion in Alabel, Sarangani.

The Moro rebels surrendered two days before members of the 44th Islamic Battalion clashed with around 35 New People's Army rebels in Gumpanta, Valley yesterday morning.

Government troops were patrolling Upper Pulan in Barangay Maasim when they clashed with the communist guerrillas led by a certain Commander Jolly.

Authorities found a cadaver, a rifle grenade, personal belongings and subversive documents with "high intelligence value" in the area following a brief firefight.

No casualties were reported.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER MONDAY, MAY 24, 2004

Moro party-list group wonders how it could lose in its own turf

By Jeffry M. Tupas
INQ Mindanao Bureau

KIDAPAWAN CITY—How can a Moro party-list group lose in Maguindanao?

Members of the party-list group Sanlakas Mindanao have questioned the commission on Elections results which showed that the Moro party-list lagged behind other groups seeking a seat in Congress.

Teynah Amparuan, Sanlakas Mindanao national deputy secretary general, alleged that the government tried to stifle opposition voice have done some "manipulation" to deter their group's bid for a House seat.

Compared to party-list groups Aanilam, Akbayan, ALIF and Asad Mindanao, Amparuan said their group was leading the count in the Bantayan sa Pagsusuri Halalan Mindanao (BABAE).

More votes than voters

"But they (government) shaved our votes and used them to get their slots votes," she said. "It's very suspicious. In every precinct, the total number of votes for the party-list was much bigger than the number of registered voters in the number of people who actually voted."

Amparuan cited the votes of Bida Mendiola at in Maguindanao where the statement of votes (SOV) indicated there were 9,751 registered voters, but the number of people who voted totaled 10,521.

In the same town, Aanilam's SOV was different from its certificate of canvass (CoC), which indicated it had received 4,277 votes. Inside Mindanao got 1,477 votes but the CoC showed that another thousand votes had been added to it. Bayan received a total of 2,469 votes, but the CoC reflected only 618.

Ms. Pinang Gonia, also in Maguindanao, Bayan got 4,477 votes but the became 3,341 in the SoV at the provincial level. In contrast, Aanilam's 636 votes ballooned to 5,367, Anne's 987 votes also swelled to 8,113.

Zero votes

Sulaia had zero votes in the town of Buluan, while Akbayan got a total of 8,502 votes and Aanilam 200 votes.

Sulaia got zero votes in the town of Sultan Kudarat where the election was overseen by the military.

"We have evidence that the government was behind all this. They cheated in while the military was harassing our members in throughout ARMM," Amparuan said.

True colors

"We're beginning to see the true colors of the those who say they are fighters for the Bangsamoro people. Because of self-interest, they employed massive vote-shaving and padding," she said.

Even before the start of the election period, Amparuan said that the group cannot had been critical of Sulaia and other progressive groups like Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela, Anak ng Bayan and Migrante.

Chavit's rival demands recount

THE BAMBAN people-[illegible] and now rival of newly proclaimed Bayan Ko Gov. Jun "Chavit" Singson has asked the Commission on Elections to order a recount of votes in the gubernatorial race to [illegible] declared Singson the winner [illegible] votes for Singson and failing to count the ballots cast for him.

In a [illegible] complaint filed before the Comelec [illegible], Allen Bulaong asked for a revision of ballots and a recount of votes in the [illegible] municipalities and two cities of the province.

He also asked the poll body to annul the proclamation of Singson as the winner of the gubernatorial race.

Based on the Comelec count, Bulaong garnered 134,614 votes while Singson received 267,869, winning by 49,000 votes. Bulaong, a three-time provincial board member, has also run for governor in 2001 and lost.

"Bad votes by Bulaong were intentionally or unintentionally counted or tallied in the election returns both in the precinct levels and in the municipal and/or city canvass or votes of Singson," he said in his election protest.

The [illegible] should recount the votes in all 1,207 precincts in the province, and review the ballots which election officers considered as stray ballots and did not count in his favor.

Bulaong, a radio announcer and a retired army officer, [illegible] as [illegible] governor on March 2004 [illegible] against Singson [illegible] by the tragedy. Bimabuk Bayo

Filipino seamen, cars fall into sea

SINGAPORE—Thirty-six Filipino seamen working on cars ships are safe after a collision between both vessels north of Singapore midnight Saturday, authorities said Sunday.

One of the ships, the car carrier MV Hyundai Ho 108, had a cargo of 4,500 South Korean and Japanese cars that sank into the sea along with the vessel.

The 16 Filipino and four Korean crew members on board were rescued before the ship sank, said Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore spokesperson Theresa Peng.

No leak

The other vessel, the tanker MT Kumyoung, was carrying 279,949 tons of crude oil. There was no immediate leak of oil from the Panama-registered vessel despite damage to its forward tank, Peng said.

The tanker was leaving Indonesian Singapore's port for damage assessment with its crew of 28 Filipinos and an Japanese remaining onboard, Peng said.

The cause of the accident, which occured 6 kms southeast of the coast island of Bintan, was being investigated, officials said.

Warnings

Prior to the collision, warnings were given to the two vessels by the MPA's vessel traffic information service. The two vessels also communicated with each other," the Port Authority said in a statement.

Peng said both ships were running through the city-state, one of the world's busiest ports.

The MV Hyundai was carrying about 2,800 new cars exported by South Korea's largest automaker, Hyundai Motors Co. and to Kia Motors affiliate, as well as some 1,900 second-hand Japanese cars, the ship operator, Yamato Car Carriers, said Reuters.

Paid-for

The Korean automakers and Yamato Car Carriers, which chartered the sunken ship from Malaysia, said they incurred no financial damage from the accident.

"The insured cars had been paid for already and they were insured for accidents," said John Jang, a Hyundai Motor spokesperson.

The 184-meter long MV Hyundai, which was built in 1987, was bound for Germany carrying such models as the small-sized passenger car Click and sports utility vehicles Santa Fe and Tucson for export to Russia, Thailand, Germany and other European countries, Jang said. AP Reuters

Military eyed in woman's gruesome death

By Jean Deandoy Jr.
INQ7 Laoag Bureau

INCA (27)—The gruesome killing of 19-year-old Virgie Beltran has shocked villagers at Sitio Bantay Bumingbingan, Lagangilang, Abra, who discovered her body parts hidden in tall grass and shrubs about 3 kilometers from the village where she grew up.

Her dismembered body bore certain signs where villagers found her remains on April 15, 21 days after the was declared missing in Tineg, Tayum, Abra, on March 26.

Bienvenido Beltran, 46, father of Virgie and a member of pro-leftist group Bayan Muna, struggled to find words to express his thoughts on the tragedy and the agony he was going through. He fled the village after soldiers threatened to kill him.

Virgie's case has remained one of the 28 unsolved abduction cases and four gruesome killings in the third district of Cordilleras that that began on March 1, the day the New People's Army (NPA) reportedly captured its soldiers.

A disconcerted source, however, said the military knew about Beltran's secret. But upper echelons fear a bevy of issues that the lower part will hold flesh up to the contradictions. The right hint was missing, with a clean cut of the ankle. He guarantees from human except for a jacket on the wrist.

The Beltrans alleged that Virgie through a scan on her left leg which was injured when she fell from a tree. Virgie left behind a seven-month-old baby.

Army denial

Col. Ernesto Boy, (retd.), Army spokesperson here, however, denied that soldiers were responsible for Virgie's abduction, stating: Our military detachment in Tineg had been dismantled since December last year.

"We will look into the veracity of the report about the involvement of the military in the abduction of Virgie Beltran. We will direct Col. Rubio Rabonza, the 503rd Infantry Brigade to conduct further investigation," Raymundo said.

Beltran's father said Virgie on March 16 when she left the village for her job as a housekeeper of the De Guzman family in Baliuag City.

On her way to Angas, she dropped by her sister in Tineg, but never arrived in Baliuag. And Beltran said he received a text message from Virgie's cellphone on March 26 telling him that she was on her way home.

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Arrivals

The soldiers told him that his daughter Virgie was accused of having an "unmoored" attitude communist fighters's.

Before leaving, the soldiers told him to return to the village. Presuming for his safety, he sought refuge in one of the towns in Cordillera but when he returned, in temporary jobs in construction.

He was in hiding when the villagers found Virgie's body parts.

More than a month has passed since Virgie's death, but the agony continues to grip her father who now lives in the safety of the family he left behind in his village.

Before the 24 alleged abductions, one was able to escape safely, four were later found dead. Virgie was the third abduction victim found dead.

Detachment

He also learned that Virgie was brought to the military detachment in Tineg. Beltran said he came to his house on March 27 and interrogated him on the whereabouts of NPA soldiers the next.

Beltran said the soldiers told him to keep quiet and only cooperation his wife wanted. But he could only identify the soldiers by their voices since they did not wear name plates.

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He was in hiding when the villagers found Virgie's body parts.

More than a month has passed since Virgie's death, but the agony continues to grip her father who now lives in the safety of the family he left behind in his village.

Before the 24 alleged abductions, one was able to escape safely, four were later found dead. Virgie was the third abduction victim found dead.

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Cebu wants 'Palace'

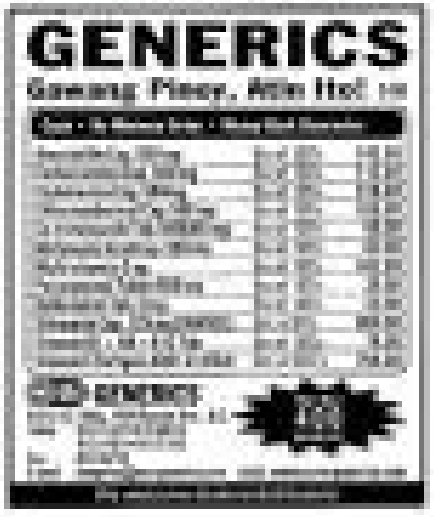
CEBU CITY—A "Little Malacañang" in Cebu?

Mayor Tomas Osmeña said he would propose to President Macapagal-Arroyo the establishment of a satellite Office of the President, as well as the transfer of the Department of Tourism here, "Cebu being the center of the Philippines and of tourism."

Osmeña said the city government would put up the land for a "little Malacañang" at the 36-ha South Road Properties Project, a mid-to-high-income condominium-cum-shopping development to be the only commercial-industrial zone in Metro Cebu.

"I am serious. Maybe it's a good opportunity for the President to realize that Manila is not the Philippines and [vice versa]," Osmeña told reporters yesterday.

Moving the DOT here would also bring in more investors to Cebu, he said. Jaime B. Bautista, Phil Navarro Ramos



Bishop warns of very difficult days ahead

Malacañang denied the charges and branded the President's opponents as "agents of anarchy."

"If she (Ms Macapagal) wins and, most probably, she'll win, she'll find it hard to govern because there will always be questions on the credibility of the elections, she will find it hard to push the country ahead," Cruz said.

No one with clean hands

Asked about allegations of cheating hatched by the opposition and administration camps against each other, Cruz said: "Nobody is beyond suspicion."

The CBCP, composed of around 86 active bishops, has not yet issued a statement—as a body—on the conduct of the elections. But its president, Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, had urged the reconciliation between Ms Macapagal and her four rival candidates.

"Even if she wins, many people don't like her and there's very sad," Cruz said. "With all her machinery and all, her lead is not big. That showing is pitiful.

"That means there are a lot of people who are not pleased with her ... That means people don't like you."

No cool into the fire, please

Reacting to Cruz's statements, the President's campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said it would be better for people to help the government forge unity, rather than keep more coal to a fire.

Defensor said Cruz had been critical of Ms Macapagal even during the campaign and had even criticized her use of Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) funds, a charge Malacañang had already addressed.

"There is no other person who has the connections, both legal and moral, except for the President, because of her victory," Defensor said.

Church won't be a tool

KNP campaign manager Crispi Remonde said he talked with Bishop Cardinal Vidal and the Davao archbishop told him to tell Ms Macapagal that he would not allow the Catholic Church to be used to sour division in the country.

Remonde said Vidal would meet with bishops this week and come out with a pastoral letter to coincide with the convening of the votes.

In the interview, Cruz said the administration's domestic critic of Ms Macapagal's critics as promotions of anarchy and linked to communist rebels showed the President was getting nervous.

Who is happy?

"She is becoming nervous because her lead since PR is not that big and the climate is not favorable (with) all quarters, I mean, who is happy with (how) elections?" Cruz asked.

The bishop said: "I wish for the best, I pray for her because this is my country, too, but with all the accusations, suspicions, robery do we go?"

In any case, whoever is proclaimed president will have a huge task of rebuilding the country he said.

"I hope whoever wins can lead the country back on track less the government has no money). Itching no harbor) bring harmless talker (It will) again bodyne more money)," Cruz said.

A MARINE guards ballot boxes at the PICC where the Commission on Elections is canvassing the votes.

The prelate said Ms Macapagal lost her moral ascendancy to lead when she resigned on the premise she made on Dec. 30, 2003 not to run for president.

'Where are we now?'

"When she announced that she would run, I am afraid she not only changed her mind but she changed the political color in the country as well. Look at where we are now," Cruz said.

"It would have been the big (moral) ascendancy (economy) to unite the Filipino people. She could have been a towering figure in society because of statesmanship ... (but now) she has lost the moral authority to tell everybody to be sober and calm."

Gossip through texting

Despite its appearance of being marred in all kinds of gossip spread through mobile phones, Malacañang officials worked overtime yesterday on duty very supposes that Work. Ingilan had advised Ms Macapagal to stop them and preserve a civil war.

The rumors claimed the US air war was poised on to kik Macapagal by former US Ambassador Stephen Bosworth.

In a telephone interview, Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunyo said Bosworth had only discussed his group's assessment of the Philippines' post-election scenario in a meeting with the President on Tuesday.

"He (Bosworth) was not pressing any conditions demands on the administration. No one has to tell the Filipinos what our problems are and what to do about them," said Bunyo.

Malacañang had previously kept a lid on the meeting.

Bet your last peso

Bunyo said he was not ignore during the meeting and that he relied on information given him by Ambassador Roberto Romulo, who had accompanied Bosworth.

Bosworth is the head of the Council of Foreign Relations Group for Preventive Action Otiedo up of prominent American diplomats and businessmen with special interests in the Philippines.

In a paper presented to Ms Macapagal, the group warned the country's modest economic gains during the last two years would be imperiled if the elections were not credible.

Bunyo said the "additional" would not succeed in their efforts to discredit the administration because the people have spoken and were tired of their antics.

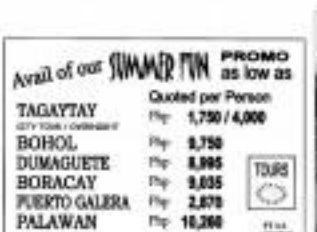
"You can bet your last peso on the capability of the President to unite the country and fight for change," Bunyo said.

Opposition complains

In Cebu on Friday, senatorial candidates Francisco Tatad of the KNP and Frank Chavez of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa presented to Vidal testimonials of alleged fraud to secure the Macapagal's victory.

Msgr. Achilles Delaey, media liaison officer of the Archdiocese of Cebu, said Vidal was overcommitted and promised to drive to gather more evidence.

The prelate also enjoined the two senatorial candidates to use only legal means in resolving their complaints. *With reports from Ambeth Ocampo, Republicast, PDI Virginia Barroso*



Cebu leaders tell FPJ . . .

"Say whatever (you) want but do not be misled by the machinations of the Gibbons people," Mayor Tomas Osmeña briefed. "We are very sensitive (about) our reputation and we will protect it. We won't take this sitting down."

Translation by PDI Zipro:

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo won here fair and square." Rep. Raul Del Mar of the city's north district fumed.

The indignant duo, along with several officials, called a press conference to refute "ridiculous and baseless" allegations that the city was one of the "sources of massive cheating" consumed by the administration 8-4 coalition in the last elections.

Osmeña was reelected for a second term under the local party Bando Osmeña-Pundok Kauswagan (BOPK), which supported the Macapagal.

Del Mar, who was also elected under the BOPK, challenged Fiel: "Prove your allegations. It is easy to make accusations. Don't you mean personal evidence. One mean studied very hard for a laudable victory is one-sided. Don't mistake arrogance for confidence."

Ms Macapagal won "all the way" by more than 100,000 votes in the seven-city and one-province area.

And let's not forget the "strong monitoring presence" put up by religious groups and "concerned citizens" of a supposedly "free and fair" election, the media, the officials-elect.

They attributed Ms Macapagal's victory in Cebu to her having "communicated well" with the people, and promising a platform of government that the voters appreciated.

But "issues and a thing," Osmeña said, "I don't see how he could have the slightest chance. When he came here, people wanted to hear what he was something but he talked he only two seconds and did not have a platform."

To say that the following cheated, or even helped carry out the alleged cheating, is an insult to their intelligence, Del Mar said.

"As a starting shot, he assumed that's supporters against rooting to man protest everywhere the country, of who's a criminal. That would be wrong things out of him, he pointed out, and confirm suspicions "that he is not fit for the presidency."

RP's first woman envoy to Arab nation takes post

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES marks a diplomatic milestone today with the assumption to office of its first woman ambassador to an Arab country.

Petronila Peña Garcia is the new Philippine ambassador to Egypt, replacing outgoing envoy Abelardo Pitmaverde. She is scheduled to fly to Cairo today.

Prior to her appointment, Garcia—or Gille to colleagues at the Department of Foreign Affairs—was the executive director of the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs.

Appointed OUMWA executive director on April 21 last year, Garcia was kept busy by troubles that confronted overseas Filipino workers—from ship accidents in Norway and the United States to the dangers of war in Iraq, from deportations of illegal workers in South Korea to the rape and suicide of Filipino domestics in Kuwait and Lebanon.

She is an expert on the Middle East, having served as director of Middle East Affairs from 1999-2000 at the DFA's Office of Middle East and African Affairs.

Garcia would be pursuing Philippine diplomatic interests in Egypt, a key Western ally and a major player in the troubled Middle East. Cairo is also the headquarters of the influential 21-member Arab League.

Oil-rich

Egypt is an oil-rich country, a center of tourism in North Africa and controls the strategic Suez Canal.

The new ambassador would be watching over the welfare of about 4,200 Filipinos in Egypt. She would have jurisdiction over neighboring Sudan, where there are about 930 Filipinos.

Garcia graduated from Maryknoll College with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She took masteral units in geography-sociology at the University of New South Wales, Australia, and in political sociology at South Africa University of Rwanda. She is a bona fide member of Mensa, an exclusive international organization for individuals whose IQ belongs to the top two percent of the world.

Garcia passed the foreign service officer examination in 1980 and the career minister examination in 1994.

As a career minister, she was charge d'affaires at the Philippine Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, where she was signatory to the agreement on the establishment of diplomatic relations between Namibia and the Philippines. She also served in other Philippine diplomatic and consular posts. She became third secretary and vice consul, and was later promoted to second secretary and consul at the Philippine Embassy in Singapore.

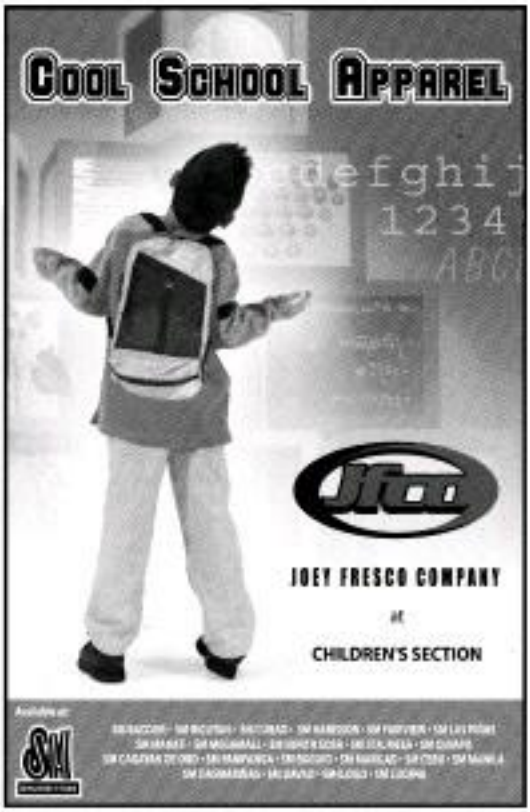
She was charge d'affaires in South Korea and held other consular positions in Sydney and Israel.

Home office

At the home office, Garcia was assigned as principal assistant to the DFA's Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations (UNIO), assistant director for Western European Affairs at the Office of European Affairs, and head of the DFA Legislative Liaison Unit.

She was special assistant to the Public Information Service Unit from June 2000 to October 2002, after which she served as UNIO director until her appointment to the OUMWA.

Garcia was born on Jan. 22, 1958. She is married to Ferd Sandico and has two sons, Angelo and Gabriel.



Jojo Bernal Tanjeco, 26

JOHN Joseph "Jojo" Bernal Tanjeco, 26, of 21 Kiniak Garcia St., Cubao, Quezon City, died in his sleep in the early morning of May 21.

Jojo is survived by his parents Nestor and Lilian Tanjeco; brother Noel; fiancee Ryah; uncles Leslie Bernal and Eliseo Reyes; aunts Norma Bernal, Susan Ritchie, Brenda Bernal and Cynthia Reyes; and cousins Marck, Christian and Yasmine Bernal.

His remains lie at the Sacred Heart Church in Kamuning, Q.C. Interment has been set for 8 a.m. on May 26 at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina following a Mass at the Sacred Heart Church.

Criticism expected in DepEd program

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The Department of Education in the Cordillera expects to receive plenty of criticism when it begins implementing the five-year curriculum for public high schools.

"We will have a lot of explaining to do since many of our students came from far away places," said Dr. Julius Bangsan, chief of the Cordillera's secondary schools department.

Close to 27,000 incoming freshmen in the region are expected to take today's national High School Readiness Test to determine who would have to undergo a one-year special curriculum called the "bridge program."

The students are expected to enroll in the Cordillera's 219 public secondary schools.

Those who will fail the test will have to enroll in the "bridge year" and take a curriculum centered on Science, Math and English before being allowed to enter freshman high.

Bangsan said 265 high school teachers who would handle the "bridge program" were being trained. Delmar Carlos, SEI Northern Luzon Bureau

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

34 dead as US troops, Iraq militia clash

KUFA, Iraq—US air strikes and fighting between US troops and Shiite militia around the Iraqi shrine city of Najaf killed at least 34 people overnight and wounded dozens, hospital staff and the US military said on Sunday.

US troops said they killed about 300 fighters when soldiers backed by tanks rushed a mosque in the neighboring town of Hafa. It was occupied by Mehdi Army guerrilla loyal to radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who launched an uprising last month.

The embattled 20 Mehdi militia were killed after firing on coalition forces during a raid on the Sahla mosque in Hafa," a US military spokesperson said. No US casualties were reported.

Staff at the main hospital in Najaf said they had taken in 14 dead and 27 wounded.

Body of 'Hero' Ibn Imam Ali Sahla mosque, one of three main shrines in Kufa. Apart Soldier raising fingers the graveyard. The doctor Ibn about 1.5 km from the town's main mosque where Sadr regularly preaches.

"They killed 12 martyrs and over 40 Mehdi army fighters were taken alive," said Kareem Hussein, a resident who lives near the mosque. "I heard tanks advancing and helicopters firing."

A CNN correspondent with the US armored unit quoted soldiers saying they killed 12 fighters on the edge of the mosque compound and four on free roads.

A white banner on the mosque read "Mehdi army: strength in the face of our enemy." US tanks approached in later broken down the wooden outer doors and demolished an obstacle in the courtyard.

About 100 soldiers gathered at the mosque, supervising rescue at the damage.

"I feel humiliated," said Ali Wisal. "Our security has been violated. These houses of prayer are the most valuable thing we own, for Shiites. I will resist them until the last drop of blood in my body," he said.

US aircraft also struck nearby Najaf, where a Reuters correspondent counted 14 bodies in the main hospital, including three women. Doctors said the dead appeared to be mainly civilians and Iraqi police left at Najaf's main police station.

The guerrillas rarely bring casualties to the hospital.

The doctors said 27 people were wounded during the strikes, when US aircraft pounded areas to the north of Najaf's ancient, sprawling cemetery after midnight. Intense shelling could be heard from the Kufa town until after dawn.

Sadr, whose forces rose up against the US occupation last month, has taken refuge among Najaf's holy sites but also has a stronghold in Kufa, where he preaches regular Friday sermons.

CNN said the US troops were not yet aiming to capture Sadr. The US military has demanded that he give himself up to face a murder charge and disband his militia.

US commanders dismissed on Saturday an offer from a Sadr aide for a dead cessfire which both sides in more than two weeks of fighting have waged and the holy city of Karbala, 90 km away.

Lt. Col. Pat White, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, told CNN his forces had called for the devastating firepower of an AC-130 gunship.

CNN said US military struck Iraq before about 600 troops backed by more than 20 tanks went in for the overnight raid. Reuters

VIOR. OUTSIDE BUKO VERSION OF AN Life—Iraqi women gather outside the Abu Ghraib jail, 30 km west of Baghdad, May 23, as they wait in hope of getting information about a relative held by US forces at the detention center. AFP

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US general linked to prison abuse case

WASHINGTON—A lawyer for a soldier charged in the Abu Ghraib abuse case said a captain at the prison has been charged but not in Gen. Ricardo Sanchez' own present during some unspecified "interrogations and/or allegations of the prisoner abuse," The Washington Post reported on Sunday.

Citing a recording of a military hearing obtained by the newspaper, The Post said the military lawyer, Capt. Robert Shuck, was told that Sanchez, the highest-ranking US military officer in Iraq, and other senior officials were aware of what was taking place at Abu Ghraib.

Shuck is assigned to defend Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick, one of the seven US soldiers charged so far in three women, accused of abuses at the prison. One pleaded guilty on Wednesday and was imprisoned.

The Post reported on Saturday that Frederick had been accused by military police officers involved in the scandal of being an organizer of the abuse.

The US Congress and the Pentagon are both investigating the involvement of physical and sexual abuse of Iraqi inmates at the prison outside Baghdad that have surfaced in the past month. Details of the abuse, including graphic photos and sworn depositions, have shaken the Bush administration as it attempts to turn back sovereignty to the Iraqis on June 30.

The Post on Saturday published testimony of soldiers speaking of fists and uniform pleas to abusing prisoners. A day earlier it published seven images, including video, of Iraqis being beaten and sexually humiliated.

The newspaper said Shuck made the allegation regarding Sanchez at an April 2 hearing, stating he had been told that by the company commander, Capt. Donald Reese.

"Are you saying that Captain Reese is going to testify that General Sanchez was there and saw this going on?" the military prosecutor asked, according to the transcript.

"That's what he told me," Shuck said.

A Defense Department spokesperson referred questions to US military officials in the Middle East. The spokesperson said The Post that statements by defense lawyers or their clients should be treated with "appropriate caution." Reuters

Iran sends warning to US over its actions in Iraq

TEHRAN—Iran said on Sunday it had sent a formal message of warning to the United States about its actions in neighboring Iraq.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hamid Reza Asefi also denied suggestions made by some US officials in recent days that Iraqi Governing Council member shiraud Chalabi had passed sensitive US intelligence about Iraq to Iran.

"We have warned the Americans about Iraq," Asefi told a weekly news conference. "It is natural for two countries which do not have diplomatic relations to exchange messages."

Asefi did not comment on the contents of the warning, but officials and religious leaders in Shiite Muslim Iran have expressed outrage in recent weeks about the presence of US-led forces in the holy Shiite Iraqi cities of Najaf and Kerbala.

Asefi said the diplomatic message was sent via the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, which represents US interests in Iran.

Washington broke ties with Iran in 1980.

Asefi described as "baseless" accusations made by unnamed US officials in some US media that Chalabi—whose Baghdad headquarters were raided by US troops and Iraqi police last week—had leaked information to Iran that the officials said could "get Americans killed."

"We have our received any classified information, neither from Chalabi nor any member of the Iraqi Governing Council," he said.

"What is going on between us and members of the Iraqi Governing Council and all groups in Iraq is negotiation, the exchange of views and clear and transparent cooperation."

Asefi said the accusations against Chalabi, a former favorite of the Pentagon, were part of an effort to deflect attentions away from Washington's problems in Iraq. Reuters

Top Republican questions Bush foreign policy

WASHINGTON—A prominent US Senate Republican with lifelong experience in foreign affairs questioned Saturday the way the administration of President George W. Bush is conducting the war on terror, arguing it "will not be won through arrogance."

The warning, delivered by Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a graduation address at Yale University, laid bare a widening rift between the president and moderate Republicans, who are increasingly concerned by the escalating conflict in Iraq and buying US criticism with traditional allies.

Bush rushed to Capitol Hill Thursday in a bid to persuade members of his party that despite increasing violence, his Iraq policy will eventually bear fruit as well as reassure them about rapidly opinion polls, some of which show presidential approval ratings in the low 40s.

But Lugar's speech indicated the pep rally did little to assuage the deep concern about the overall direction of US foreign policy harbored by the Indiana Republican.

"Unless the United States commits itself to a sustained program of repairing and building alliances, expanding trade, pursuing resolutions to regional conflicts, supporting democracy and development worldwide, and controlling weapons of mass destruction, we are likely to experience acts of catastrophic terrorism that would undermine our economy, damage our society, and kill hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people," the chairman warned. AFP

Britain hits US tactics in Iraq

LONDON—A leaked memo from Britain's foreign ministry blasts "heavy-handed tactics" by the US military in Iraq and soldiers' abuse of prisoners, the Sunday Times newspaper reported.

London has been Washington's most staunch ally throughout the conflict, but the paper said the memo "blows apart" Prime Minister Tony Blair's public insistence that there are no differences between Britain and the United States over strategy.

The paper reported the memo said under the heading "Problems": "Heavy-handed US military tactics in Fallujah and Najaf some weeks ago have fueled both Sunni and Shiite opposition to the coalition and lent as much public support inside Iraq."

It added: "The scandal of the treatment of detainees at abu Ghraib (prison) has sapped the moral authority of the coalition, inside Iraq and internationally."

The Foreign Office refused to comment on the report on Saturday night.

The government has repeatedly denied that London and Washington differ on Iraq policy but Blair's main political opponent said this week the prime minister "often voiced disquiet in private and urged him to bring the debate into the open."

Blair "seems to take the view that any advice he offers on US policy must be made in private and any disagreement kept secret," opposition Conservative leader Michael Howard wrote in Thursday's Independent newspaper. Reuters

AYALA LIFE FIXED INCOME FUND, INC.

Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting of Stockholders of Ayala Life Fixed Income Fund ("ALFM") will be held on Friday, May 28, 2004, 3:00 p.m. at Quason C Ballroom of Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Ayala Avenue, Makati City for the consideration of the following business:

1. Calling of meeting to order
2. Certification of notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Reading and approval of the minutes of the Annual Stockholders Meeting held last June 14, 2003
5. Presentation and approval of the Annual Report and other reports of the investment manager
6. Approval and confirmation of all acts of the Board of Directors and of management
7. Election of Directors
8. Confirmation of BPI Asset Management as investment manager (continuing term unless expressly terminated)
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Business
11. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on March 31, 2004, that is not duly and timely filed by the Board of Directors, are entitled to notice of, and to vote at said meeting.

For your convenience, admission to the meeting will be by identification cards only. If you are a stockholder of record and plan to attend, please bring the Stockholders Identification card attached to the Voting Ticket. This is enclosed in the notice of annual meeting sent to all stockholders earlier by mail.

In order that your stock may be represented at the meeting in case you are not personally present, please complete, sign and date the Voting Ticket and return it promptly to the Office of the Corporate Secretary with office address located on 17th Floor BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas St., Makati City. Contact numbers are as follow: (Tel) 02 845-5064, 02 816 6708, (Fax) 02 845-5288.

By order of the Board of Directors,

(Sgd.) SABINO PADILLA IV
Corporate Secretary

ERIC TUNDLE
A belated President Bush arrives in Austin, Texas, for a graduation celebration for his daughter Jenna, on May 22. Bush addressed the mid-term graduation ceremony where he fell while maintain hitting on his crash-and-had minor abrasions on his chin, lip, cheekbone and knee.

Opec: No deal yet on more oil

AMSTERDAM – Opec on Saturday expressed "sharp concern" about high-flying world oil prices, saying it wanted to cut fuel costs to support world economic growth.

But the president of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Purnomo Yusgiantoro, said no decision was made during informal talks in Amsterdam on raising crude supplies. Opec will set policy in Beirut on June 5, he said.

Ministers were declined to make a recommendation to Beirut on a Saudi proposal to lift oil quota limits by at least 0.5 percent, two million barrels a day, to topple $35 crude prices from $42 a barrel.

Producers face heavy pressure from big petroleum importers who fear rising energy costs could slow strong economic growth.

The Group of Seven economic powers, meeting this weekend in New York, is expected to call for early Opec action.

Sending Opec producers Saudi Arabia, acting unilaterally to ease trading conditions in the global oil market, is considered too high for the long-term health of world fuel demand.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi released a statement on Friday stating Riyadh was already committed to output of nine million barrels a day next month.

That is up from about 8.3 million bpd in April and a rise of nearly 10 percent over its existing Opec quota of 7.36 million, raising questions among some fellow cartel members, even though they can pump no more.

"This is all about what Saudi Arabia wants to do. They have repeated long-term demand because they control 30 percent of the world's proven reserves," said consultant Gary Ross of New York's PIRA Energy.

"At the end of the day Saudi Arabia is the only country with significant spare capacity and they are not going to be constrained by others with more."

World oil prices eased on Friday after news of the Saudi plan. US crude ending off $1 cents at $38.65 a barrel, the first close below $40 in 10 days.

But traders said prices could go up again if the market interprets Saudi oil minister's statement as a possible end of Opec as we behind Saudi.

"There are two sources here... that Saudi doesn't have explicit support for an increase and that spare capacity is so limited," said Thomas Riedel of brokers Refco in New York.

Wagner said Saudi could open the pumps even further if necessary, getting an assurance that Riyadh was capable of reaching a maximum of 10.5 million barrels daily.

Other Opec members, enjoying full capacity output at $40 a barrel, may have little choice but to fall in line with Riyadh.

Estimates from consultancy Petrologistics say that output in May from 10 to Opec with quotas, including Iraq, is 26.10 million bpd. That is 2.80 million bpd over oil's all-time of 23.5 million, well in excess even of the blockades.

Oil-consuming nations, meeting with Opec in Amsterdam at a forum this weekend, said they blamed the blame for high prices.

"I would not say that they, Opec, are responsible for all of it. Job consumer countries are to responsible in part," said Claude Mandil, the head of the International Energy Agency, advisor on energy to 26 industrialized nations. Reuters

Iraq war's costs nearing twice that of '91 war

By David Pilliam

WASHINGTON – The price of the bloodier than predicted war and occupation of Iraq is nearing twice that of the 1991 Gulf War, and the economic consequences are complex and far-reaching, analysts said.

In the run-up to the invasion, the White House Office of Management and Budget director, Mitch Daniels, had said a war would probably cost $50 billion to $60 billion.

He dismissed the $1.00 billion to $200 billion estimate of White House economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey, who since departed, as "likely too, very high."

But so far, Congress has appropriated $166 billion just to keep troops in Iraq until the end of September this year, said the Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments' military budget analyst, Steven Kosiak.

President George W. Bush's administration this month asked for another $25 billion, mostly for Iraq, for the next fiscal year. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz also warned he would be back for more.

In all, the full bill military operations alone would likely amount to $700 billion by the end of Sept. 30, 2009—far more than the 1990-91 Gulf War's $61 billion price, Kosiak said.

In addition, $23 billion had been set aside to help rebuild Iraq and train its security personnel, he estimated.

Before the war, Andrew Watson, the head of the UK Agency for International Development, had said $1.7 billion to reconstruction costs would be "the limit."

"The administration clearly vastly underestimated what this would cost," Kosiak said. "It is deeply open-ended. It depends more than anything else on how many troops we have over there for how long."

The economic costs are harder to calculate.

Before the war, Australian economist professor Warwick McKibbin co-authored a study on the economic implications with Andrew Stoeckel of the Centre for International Economics.

It suggested even a short conflict could have a broad economic cost of $173 billion in 2003, rising to $1.06 trillion by 2010, while a longer, bogged-down war could cost $237 billion in 2003, rising to $1.87 billion by 2010.

"It took our study as if it were relevant," said McKibbin, a fellow of the Washington-based Brookings Institution and a board member of the Reserve Bank of Australia.

"We considered a long war with higher oil prices around $60 per barrel, and this looks pretty good," he said. "I think there is still a very long way to go, but our long war scenario more looks most likely and the costs are mounting."

New York's crude oil rocketed hit an all-time high of $41.45 dollars in electronic trading May 17 but fell below $40 Friday after Saudi Arabia suggested Opec could raise output substantially.

"The fact that the long situation has yet to let residents tends to preserve an above-average level of risk regarding the situation in the Middle East, and the fact we are paying more for crude oil," said Moody's Investors Service chief US economist John Lonski.

"It is very difficult to try to quantify what the costs might be." The conflict also produced more relief, he said.

"There is chance that money that the politicians could spend in a manner that eventually disrupts shipments of crude oil from the Middle East and Persian Gulf. In turn, that would drive energy prices up to levels that potentially curb economic activity worldwide."

The military spending also had a positive impact on the US economy, Kosiak said. Wisconsin global economist Jay Bryson.

"In terms of budgetary numbers, I think it has probably been somewhat stimulative to the US economy. You are pumping more money into the coffers, and some of that money gets spent there at home," he said.

"But overall when you have pursuit cut the oil prices and you have passed on any sort of knock-on consumer consumers... it is very difficult to say one way or the other." The bottom line was that the fallout of the war had linked to interrupt the global economy. AFP

JUBILATION IN SPAIN

Romance leads to royal wedding

By Donna Ross-Thomas

MADRID—He wanted as a soldier and sailor and dated a string of glamorous blondes while she studied law and went to become a famous TV presenter. One day they met over dinner and now he has chosen her as his future queen.

Spain's Crown Prince Felipe, 36, 6'7" tall, dark, dashing and blue-eyed, married elegant former news anchor Letizia Ortiz, 31, in a lavish wedding in Madrid on Saturday.

Ortiz, daughter of a journalist and a nurse turned news reader, started early on her path to becoming a household name, making her first radio broadcast when she was 10, according to a new book about the pair, "You'll be my Queen," by Angels Pedro and Vicente Gonzalez Dehesa.

Felipe grew up in Madrid in the final years of General Francisco Franco's rule and was 7 when his father, Juan Carlos, came to the throne after the dictator's death.

He was 13 when his father put down a right-wing coup attempt in February 1981, and Juan Carlos is reported to have decided the young prince spend the night in his bed.

After schooling in Madrid, Felipe set off for Canada to finish high school. A year later he returned to train in the Army Navy and Air Force, learning, among other things, to fly a helicopter.

Meanwhile Ortiz moved from the rural northern region of Asturias to Madrid, entering a new high school, where she met the future queen (earlier she would have married).

Ortiz and Felipe both studied for their degrees in Madrid—journalism in the Complutense university for him, law and economics across town at University Autonoma de Madrid for her.

He is in Paris during intellectual leaders' initiation, although not under the gentle as a potential spouse, the media said, because his parents were divorced.

Ortiz was at university and working as an intern when Felipe became a national icon, sailing for Spain in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Crossing the atlantic

He then went to Washington to study for a master's degree in international relations, and dated Jill scandal Gigi Howard.

Ortiz also crossed the Atlantic to start a doctorate she did not finish in Guadalajara, Mexico.

"She was always very ambitious, in the best sense of the word ... She had a journalist's vocation," Yuri Rizik, friend and colleague at Eight 21 newspapers in Mexico, told Reuters.

"She is intelligent and has women's values, which she used well ... I don't think it was love, but very hard for her to turn the prince."

Ortiz returned to Spain and worked for financial news station Bloomberg TV and news channel CNN+. In 1996, she appeared in a short film "The Look of an angel," playing an angel with wings.

Some when time she married her former teacher and then divorced him a year later. Meanwhile Felipe missed wife-dating Norwegian model Eva Sannum. Few in Spain considered the one-time underwear model with divorced parents a fit romance.

In 2000, Ortiz joined state television network Television Espanola and Felipe was named an "honorary person" by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan for his volunteer work.

Months later she won a prize for best journalist under 30.

The future king and queen met at a dinner party at the end of 2002, local media reported, and got closer in the spring of the following year. In 2003, Ortiz went to Iraq after the US-led invasion. By September her interviews can had resulted in prods as an anchor on the nine o'clock news and a household name.

Two months later she was engaged. Reuters

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

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Caution: Don't railroad GMA's proclamation

THE ELECTORAL battle shifts today from the polling places, Comelec and the quick counts to Congress, which starts canvassing the presidential and vice presidential votes tomorrow. And the very first clash, even before the canvassing begins, will be over the minority's 14-man canvassing board. For the votes, said inhabitants in previous elections, are really marked up against the opposition candidates. Opponents of Gen. Aguinaldo Pantaleon Jr. names these to be replaced with a fairer set.

There will be opposition representatives during the canvassing but their will be there merely as observers. There just aren't enough of them to do the counting of certificates of canvass that are spurious and questionable, but the board may well overrule these. For instance, the results on an official Comelec copy of a COC may be different from those on the copies of the other accredited parties—an indication that there could be something very wrong with them—but the board can disregard the discrepancies and go ahead with the canvassing.

The issue one is going to a vote, but solemn, serious legislators outnumber opposition members in the electoral tribunal, before the issue can be one voted anyway. The membership of the tribunal is divided evenly between the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives and by the number of members that have in the legislature. And since the senate presumably supports the legislators in Congress, there are also more of votes in the electoral tribunal. The administration has the numbers and any objection raised by the opposition, no matter how meritorious, can be shouted down.

You can be sure that the administration representatives will try to railroad the proclamation of President Macapagal-Arroyo. They will use as an excuse the threat of a power vacuum in government if nobody is proclaimed president by June 30, the day the terms of all elected public officials, including the President, end. But delaying a proclamation is much less worse than proclaiming the wrong winner. The

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

latter is a recipe for disaster.

For starters except the similarities of the present situation to 1986 when Congress proclaimed Ferdinand Marcos as the winner of the national vote shortly after the People Power revolt. Cory Aquino had won and she had proclaimed herself President. Then and the failed proclaim by Gen. Fidel V. Ramos and then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile stormed Edsa I.

The people have not forgotten that the most powerful person in the nation can be toppled if enough people take to the streets. We have had Edsa II, Edsa III and possibly more Edsas if the people think massive cheating has defeated the integrity of the electoral process. The administration camp should ponder on this before it starts to railroad a proclamation.

Marcos and Erap never even dreamed that they would be ousted out of Malacañang by a rabble, but those were not the rabble did. They thought the military and the police would protect them, but did not, and then were among the first to defy allegiance.

Did the former rulers tell their friend Mahuathma a just this. Learn well. Whenever Mahuathma feels ahead, it does not tolerate a happy note; it hears threatening press releases, like slapping million charges on opposition press.

Mahuathma knows that cheating cannot be cheated. Of course, 99 percent of all losers in Philippine elections claim they have been cheated, but sometimes they are correct. And there is always cheating in Philippine elections. Nobody can deny that. The difference is in the degree. If there's massive cheating, the true will of the people can be thwarted. And if the cheating is too blatant and obvious, the people get angry.

As the administration representatives in the electoral tribunal should see be too quiet and unsympathetic. Don't railroad GMA's proclamation. If she had really won, she would be ordained overwhelm. But if she had not, it would be dangerous to say she did.

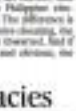
Besides, a power vacuum will not occurred. It never if she is not proclaimed by June 30. The constitutional line of succession can take over. If no vice president has been proclaimed, the Senate president can temporarily assume the presidency. And if he cannot, the speaker can, and if he cannot either, the third justice can.

So this is the chance of former President Franklin Drilon or Speaker Jose de Venecia to become president, even if only temporarily. Especially Joe de V whose ambition is so he pressing. Fate of his country I've mind to be one but was defeated. He knows he doesn't have a chance of being elected president, so he is pushing for the change of government into a parliamentary system, under which he can run for a seat in parliament and then get himself elected prime minister by the members. He can be a good a fat joe, but is a fierce name and incapacitate with to be president, don't be in a hurry to proclaim a president. After the opponents a but shake to the people will believe everything a says he loved. Remember, haste makes waste.

PIETY NOTE: The alumni of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and its successor, the College of Arts and Letters of the University of the... Roman will have their annual communion this Saturday, May 29, beginning at 10 a.m., at Alberto's siesta house on Roman Morato Avenue, Quezon City.

Mythol Strong a riveting female, especially witness in the late elections, in San Esteban's lands at his pad in Malate. Private cash dreamers and lunches, he said. Losers, or rather, those who were cheated, need not bring any presents but do order guests will be ready to commiserate and cry with them over coffee, and agree that they would have made excellent public officials had they not been cheated.

Conspiracies



Conrado de Quiros

SOMETHING asked me an interesting question last week in response to my column, about the Gutierrez's order to stop ABC-5's speech review, and to my other columnists asking for scrupulous transparency in the canvassing of votes. That question was: Why are you writing those things... should you realize PGMA becomes president?

Well, first off, whether one is president is completely and absolutely irrelevant to the counting of votes, my preferences I made unmistakably clear in several columns before the elections. Whether I want or he shouldn't vote is meaningless, as indeed whom others want or do not want to be president is irrelevant to the votes cast in the polls. That is something that should be known through the Bolshevik revolution.

My answer here elections only for those who are in a position of power or weigh the relative wisdom of one or the other candidate leading the nation and devote who should win. That is not for me to say, that is not for them to do. There is only one thing to do, and that is to count the votes rightly. There is only one thing to guard against, and that is discrediting the counting in votes), or affirming it to be tarnished down by suspicions of manipulation. There is only one thing that we must be vigilant, and that is the will of the people, as expressed by their votes.

The first time I heard the question about posed to me was several years ago, when senator Jinggoy Estrada asked me why I was "defending" Bro. Eli Lanton during the Senate committee hearings on the people he was then investigating and hearing. Did I, said my interrogator, want Lanton to be free to continue this activity?

I said then, too, that what I wanted was relevant. What mattered was whether Lanton's detractors, particularly Victor Corpus and "Tamchad" Ong, had proven their case against him. Clearly they had not. They had shown extreme imprudence his subordinates, but they had not shown evidence implicating him, and he was the subject of the committee hearing. I said we could not go around arguing that, since he was an unsavory character...having been Erap's chief hooligan, or enforcer,...it was right to put him away on trumped-up charges or another indefinitely, hoping something would stick.

That is what the question about ...whether I would like PGMA to become president by proclaiming the Erap order or ABC-5 and the qualifications of the heads of Namfrel (specifically, Bill Luz and Joe Concepcion), or be Cesar's wife—also presupposes. The supposition that we should turn a blind eye to the ethics of the hatching of conspiracies to secure widespread fraud, because they might pave the way for an FPJ presidency, is complicit in the outcome. It puts on a greater evil than the one it means to destroy. The evil of mugging the street for two weighs the evil of an FPJ presidency.

I am worried about the consequences of the inclinations of society traditionally associated with stillness or vigilance—the liberals, the schools, media, the human rights and civil liberties groups, the legal communities active in society—being apathetic or indifferent to charges of fraud in the counting, charges that have not entirely gone unfounded proof. Or indeed their willingness to tolerate fraud even if the GMA do it—true to, remark the public evil. Ah, but that tolerates a worse plague than the one it means to stop. To save super as well that if it is going to stop FPJ from becoming president, or to be a pushing for the change of government into a parliamentary system, under which he can run for a seat in parliament and then get himself elected prime minister by the members. He can be a good a fat joe, but is a fierce name and incapacitate with to be president, don't be in a hurry to proclaim a president. After the opponents a but shake to the people will believe everything a says he loved. Remember, haste makes waste.

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Nothing is more dangerous than doing the wrong things for the right end because it is the means itself that determines the ends. Wrong means, wrong ends: it is as simple as that. As the city's boat that is an because you can see us changed by the means you take, you become the means you take. You seek justice by the path of wrongs and you become the very person you hate. You stamp out every malodorous right to fight terrorism and you become the very source of terror you mean to end.

There is a complicity of silence blowing in our midst. And the problem with complicities of silence is that when first victims always come out to be—the conspirators themselves.

Let's pray for Congress canvass

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

[illegible] many more [illegible] candidates to act on [illegible] but many leaders and community heads of various [illegible] In the presidential and vice-presidential race, any claim to victory is premature. The canvassing of votes cast for candidates to elect the next highest elective position in the official function of Congress as the National Board of Canvassers. Congress convenes for the canvassing—which will prove [illegible] of canvass from all over the country, including those in the Middle East, will the chance to determine once and for all—and officially—who really won the elections for president and vice president is open as.

At 3 p.m. today, the two chambers of Congress will convene separately in a special session to approve the rules that will govern the canvass of COCs. Tomorrow morning the two chambers will meet in joint session (COCs will be transported to the Batasan and at 2 p.m. Congress will meet, this time in joint session, to begin the canvass. It is a historic occasion because this is the first time that Congress is convened to canvass in recent memory.

There are reports that the opposition would attempt to disrupt the canvass in various ways. Let's hope, however, that the canvass will be orderly and peaceful among our legislators; that they be motivated primarily by love of country and concern for their constituents more than their political parties. Let's pray for them, too, relative to the effort by pushing for our lawmakers during these critical weeks. Perhaps, the different churches could hold prayer vigils.

* * *

As the column pointed out last Saturday in significant are the elections for the two top offices of our land but the Constitution says it is to assign to Congress the task of canvassing the votes cast in the elections and proclaiming the winners for the two highest positions. May I add my voice to those of our citizens exhorting our lawmakers to extend today's session that will approve the rules of canvass.

* * *

The Liberal Party issued a terse full-page statement in various newspapers yesterday. It cited "Let the people's voice be heard...A Free and Honest election." It said that "the challenge is all of the candidates and their parties is in place the national interests over and above personal ambitions and political gain." It said that "the sovereign will of the people expires on line of their leaders, so that whenever receives their mandate to lead our country in the next six years can fully address the complex problems besetting our country today." The LP statement also said that all that the remaining be allowed to take its course and that people ought to wait "for the final and official canvass before claiming victory or declaring that there was massive and systematic fraud in the polls."

* * *

That part about the LP statement admonishing people to await the "final and official canvass before claiming victory" doubtless had in mind opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr., who has been going around proclaiming that he has already been elected president. Poe has also claimed that his running mate should be sworn in as vice president immediately at 12:01 a.m. on June 30 in Cebu, where alleged Bombilene COCs showing a Chiz win are to be presented. The report also said that 191 followers were asked to come in formal attire, triggering speculation that a "proclamation" was to follow. But yesterday afternoon a media invitation canceled the press conference.

* * *

I hope that Senator Pimentel is right in PTI and he would assist the official count in Congress. I also hope he would continue to ignore the advice of the five vested governors on making inquiries, whose only goal seems to be to demobilize the political dissidents.

* * *

There's another interesting matter: the canvass will start today at 3 p.m. to approve the rules of canvass, and judging from reports, this might take time as opposition members are said to be readying to raise questions that have that Senator and Mrs. Edgardo Angara have invited many friends to their wedding anniversary celebration to be held at 6:00 p.m. today at the Manila Polo Club (they have another reason to celebrate: their son just got elected to the House next time his sister, Rep. Bella Angara-Castillo, formerly occupied the seat in Aurora province of Aurora). Political pundits speculate that this could be Angara's way of avoiding being caught in the mess in the Senate today.

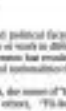
* * *

I have difficulty following the objection of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel to the creation in Congress of the "joint committee" for the canvass of the COCs. Under the rules of Congress the governed documents in the House and Senate only can elect a majority delegation a 24-member joint committee to handle the canvass and prepare the report for approval in both chambers voting separately; after which the joint committee's report and proclamation and vice president shall be made by Congress. These rules are expected to be adopted today for the 2004 canvass. But Pimentel was quoted as saying that it violates the principle of equality of the majority and minority members designated by the respective chamber chiefs—is "unconstitutional"; he wants the COC canvassing done by the entire Congress. Sounds like an impossible option given the rules enumerated.

* * *

To begin with, the Constitution allows Congress to formulate its own implementing guidelines, so, under its own rules, it can do very crucial task, including creating a joint committee. Then one, on May 26, 1995, a record of the joint session of Congress to canvass that year's presidential votes showed that Senator Pimentel himself, who had just run unsuccessfully as running mate of former Senate President Jovito Salonga, assented to make sure that the canvassing was done in accordance with the guidelines that the preliminary report of the joint committee be also subjected to consideration as part of the session. In other words, he fully recognized the joint committee then.

Fixation with Fil-foreigners



READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

a combination of social, economic and political factors has pushed many Filipinos to immigrate to or work in different parts of the world. The outward movement has resulted in mixed marriages and, consequently, dual nationalities for the predominantly Filipino families.

Aside from the ubiquitous Fil-Americans, the roster of "bipartisan Filipinos" includes among others, "Fil-Australians," "Fil-Canadians" and "Fil-Britons." The latest player is to be known—"Fil-Englishmen." Jon Lennie, they have been described by media as "Fil-Englishmen."

The increasing coverage of the activities of some Fil-Ams caught the attention of Benjamin Ilustre of Batchelor City, in particular, the news reports that some are in the Bush administration serving in key posts. A member of Ft. Am got Jennifer Tran to the top three of the "American Idol" show in the United States.

He wrote: "Why do you guys in media extol foreigners of Pinoy ancestry as high honorees? They are no longer ours. Alumni Tran, Antonio Trillanes, Eliot Reyes (the actor, not Nato), etc. So are here some kind of national inferiority complex that we look to the tethered light of ex-Pinoy blood lines?

"Come to think of it, the latest reason Pinoys leave the country is that the going is tough here, there are very few opportunities for advancement. The ones who stay are the tough ones. Why admire those who abandoned ship?

"Fil-foreigners who cannot make it big in their own country are derided here. What about the home grown variety? Lea Salonga, Manny Pacquiao, Sara Geron and others? Not neglected but natural only when they made a name for themselves here. Why the fixation of Fil-Am get Jennifer Tran to the top three of the "American Idol" show to the United States.

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"Fil-foreigners who cannot make it big in their own country are derided here. What about the home grown variety? Lea Salonga, Manny Pacquiao, Sara Geron and others? Not neglected but natural only when they made a name for themselves here. Why the fixation of Fil-Am get Jennifer Tran to the top three of the "American Idol" show to the United States when Richard Chong won prestigious tennis awards left and right for several years.

The supreme people-to-see-give-cheer if Japanese dominate the sumo wrestling or sports circuits in the United States. The same goes for the Malaysians and Singaporean who assist in the accomplishments of their citizens, not close kin by citizens of other countries.

One problem with our obsession for claiming others (the wish Fil-Americans) as our own is that it is the feeling to measure those "bipartisan Filipinos" proud of their heritage before the citizens of their adopted countries? Stories are rife about Fil-Ams who, when asked to describe their whole origin, identify themselves as "from three races" as if ashamed of being more than their whole self-Am.

Many Fil-Ams migrated after the martial law period of rebuilding their whole self-Filipino heritage to make money in our country, legitimately or otherwise, then fly back to their real motherland where the going here's good enough. The Dual Citizenship Law has made this exploitative relationship easier to accomplish.

If only we have the same passion for home-grown talents as the zealous of neighboring countries.

'Kapamilya at Kapuso Inc.'

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

[illegible] an area has cracking up line. Many are old, but enduring. All of them though there's a common dominator: dynastic disposition.

They may profess that their entry in government is to serve the public. But a lot of them are there to protect their economic interests. They also provide, family and business interests. Our political democracy continues to dominate our country's political landscape—notwithstanding the administration rather than prohibit them—simply chosen how little.

And a lot of political dynasties are in Mindanao.

Sometimes Mindanao has not stopped the consolidation of political dynasties.

In Davao City, re-elected Mayor Rodrigo Duterte's daughter Sara topped the local chief executive ticket. Duterte's post-Edsa domination of the city's politics was interrupted in 1998, by the then-vice-mayor Benjamin Abalos, who served as governor of Metro Manila, defeating his erstwhile ally, lawyer Benjamin de Guzman. Duterte is the son of the late Davao Doctor Sr., who once served as governor of Davao del Sur province. Duterte's younger brother, lawyer is the Southern Mindanao Region. While no other Duterte joins run in the last elections, three other Dutertes are but has in IGG.

Lubas Rep. Prospero Magsaysa Jr. (First District), Rep. Jacinto Paras (Second District), and Rep. Manuel Garcia Jr. minister during the Marcos presidency. Garcia's father was governor of Davao del Norte in 2001. In the city's rural district, Nationalist Party's Gubernatorial Rep. Elias Boy Lopez, gave re-election bid last term, in 2001, he succeeded his brother Isidro Lopez, who served as governor for several terms as city mayor during the Marcos years.

Engrossed to succeed Lopez when he ran to make in 2007 is his younger brother Dr. Elias Lopez, a newly-elected city councilor.

In Davao del Sur, allies of Sen. Miguel Garcia found home in Rep. Ruy Elias Cullamar Jr., who is to maintain their grip on power. Gov. Benjamin Bautista Jr. was elected for a full three-year term. He was elected vice governor in 2001, but he succeeded the governorship in October 2000 when Gov. Bautista resigned. Cullamar's father was also his brother, Roger, who served as governor for three full terms. Last May 10, Bautista defeated Ito Llanos, a representative candidate for her husband Roger, who died at the end of the campaign period. Two Bautista siblings were re-elected: Claude as congressman of the province's second district, and Franklin as mayor of Malita town, elected a new agricultural plantation named by Cojuangco.

Rep. Douglas Cagas (Third District) also won another term, while his wife was elected board member. Congressman Cagas was the first governor of Davao del Sur to be elected after Edsa. Unseated by the late Roger Llanos in the 1992 elections.

In the historic growing province of Davao del Norte, political power still revolves around the Thelonsing de Rosario clan. Incumbent Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario is the son of Rep. Antonio "Tonyboy" Rosario (Fifth District), who, after serving a full term, is now the mayor of Tagum City. He reportedly opted not to run for a final term. He reportedly commissioned on his assignment as a campaign manager of his ill-fated bid.

But, his son and political luck apparent, board members Antonio del Rosario, son and even himself as the governor in tandem with their former political enemies, Assemblyman Tagum City Mayor Celesio Gementiza, who won as governor.

In the province's second congressional district, Rep. Arturo Uy Pacificador II was re-elected unopposed. Gubernatorial Arlet Otazo-Tiles District's son was re-elected to be defeating businessman wife, former Transportation Secretary Perfecto Alfonso, whom will, Trinidad, won a seat in the provincial board.

In the gold-rich province of Compostela Valley, Gov. Jose Caballero, a Lakas-CMD convert, was re-elected to serve a third term.

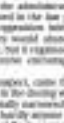
Where he ran for re-election, his political rivals will most likely be persuaded by his daughter, veteran actor, a late student, who was elected to the provincial board. Rep. Prospero Amatong (First District) is going to serve a third and final term. Before the election of Governor Jonvic Remulla, he served as governor of Davao del Norte. In the second congressional district, Rep. Manuel Zarraga will serve a second term. His daughter, Lourdes, is joining the provincial board as a new member.

In Davao Oriental, Gov. Hon. Elmo Nelson Gil leased her former ally, Gov. Corazon Malanyaon, a former congressman of the province's second district, who was defeated by Rep. Nelson Dayanghirang in the second congressional district. Rep. Manuel Zamora will serve a second term. His daughter, Lourdes, was elected member of the provincial board. Another emerging politician, Rep. Corazon Nava, will serve a third term. Her husband, Governor Nelson Dayanghirang, and wife Corazon Nava, will serve a second term. Her brother, Corazon Nava, was elected member of the provincial board.

As a reporter during my first election coverage in 1988, I remember there were days that those families were not political leaders but political leaders for decades to come. Whether or not changes are forthcoming, the results of the May 10 elections are an apparent gauge.

Here Nathan Lane, I have a report up, but there's nothing more cute? Kapamilya at kapuso Inc.?

Fight to the finish



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

That cause was dismay over what the exit poll findings said—a victory for the administration candidate by a margin of more than 10 points. An extensive survey The Pact-led opposition initially panicked, fearing its watchers would abandon the counting at a crucial time, but it regained its nerve when it started to receive encouraging reports from its watchers.

The encouraging news, I suspect, came from findings that their Tuesta hints in the closing week of the campaign had substantially narrowed the President's lead. To say, initially, anxiety increased in the possible release of Fort's figures also on voters, particularly those who'd been counting for Poe to be on the attack from day one. The news to guard their votes at a time when they could realistically hope to march victory from the final list to when, at first, seemed a race limited otherwise to rally in Makati.

The rally turned out to be the final nail in the coffin of Jr. his audience was packed to the rafters with the poor, who to Poe now who have won their hearts. However, there was also a palpable sense of panic on the part of the Palace, which the opposition sensed. My suspicion is that the decision process in the opposition was a result of the sense of the panic. If their campaign had faltered from the time Poe's citizenship was questioned, therefore giving the initiative to the administration, how much more opportunities to get the fight ground back and some of the anger they've felt with the administration has sunk. Since the day after the election, the administration has been on the defensive—and the opposition knows it.

Since the commission, who lifted the vacuum left by Gen. Eddie Villanueva's decision to refrain from announcing his followers in the arrays. The opposition can now count on organized ranks, something their rivals have been able to manage in their own way, from the "Hello Garci" to the "Hello" issued one of his "Papal Bulls" basically instructing the faithful to be prepared to resist as much mischief as possible. He can pose national issues, and can now politicize the campaign by engineered the transformation of his exit legions into yet another traditional, political base backed by the Iglesia People's Army, one his. Since to now politicize obviate the weight of his organizational machinery.

As if this weren't enough, media are circling their wagons, too, and with good reason. Newspapers such as The Tribune, and media outlets such as ABC 5, have been subjected to harassment and harassment. They have the sympathy of their brethren in the profession, who realize that when push comes to shove, media have to stand together—there is not much of a sense of a media environment that can survive if media organizations manage to league with the Comelec, the media are to close ranks. Again, the result is an administration on the defensive when, prior to the election, media have helped give the opposition the defensive.

Finally, there is the realization that an administration victory is due to the upside the desire of certain opposition leaders, Joseph Estrada foremost among them, to avoid the fate of the unfortunate of embittered politicians, some of whom will be deported of a national stadium some time 30, reasons aside the temptation to milk the situation for all the political capital they can bring to The Pact. Dakpan Dilangalen, for one, is seen salivating at the prospect of his name song being in the narrow of heading a vote against Speaker Jose de Venecia.

It will be messy. The President says. But her victory is in sight. Those trying to throw the administration regain a sense of equilibrium in the coming days.

* * *

Continued on website at www.gmanews.ph

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Watch out: safe sex is not that safe

LETTERS

HUMAN Rights Watch said the government is taking possible explosion of HIV/AIDS cases by handing the use of foods by condoms in defiance to the Catholic Church's policy against birth control. An organization devoted to promoting and refining human rights abuses—presumably after they have occurred—is now producing a catastrophic situation that is precisely will happen...sooner than later. The organization should become itself Prophecy Watch. Or better still, Nice Prophet Inc.

For the same organization said, now that the Philippines has one of the lowest incidence of HIV and AIDS in Asia—despite the Church's anti-condom stand. Use it. Ride the state's HIV/AIDS monitoring Record, show it serves only wise to point that the Catholic anti-condom morality has somehow moved off the epidemic. Elsewhere, in Thailand, where condom is freely given, the epidemic stalls, stabbed.

But Human Rights Watch does not seem to acknowledge these facts and chooses to play prophet. Last year, Seth Mydans of The New York Times cited the same facts his conflict-ridden reporting with incredulity the Philippines' relatively low HIV/AIDS experience. How could Catholic Philippines be relatively AIDS-free?

The answer is that safe sex is not exactly safe, studies show condom failure rates from as low as 5 percent to as high as 30 percent. The microscopic HIV virus can penetrate through a condom...how much more if the condom is defective? How else could we explain the high rate of HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies in safe sex-crazy Thailand, the United States and elsewhere, where condoms are distributed as freely as candies?

At least, Human Rights Watch is consistent in calling on the Philippine government to use taxpayers' money to buy and distribute condoms. This is what we have been saying all along: there is a neo-colonial, imperialist and racist element base in the call of populous control groups here and abroad, for the Philippines to implement more draconian fertility control and safe sex programs. Watch then could otherwise be used for poverty alleviation instead of re-buying condoms from multinationals for distribution to the poor. The poor, who don't have land could at least have condoms. Meanwhile, the rich of the Boat gorge on the millions they generate from selling condoms to gullible Third World countries that they label as overpopulated or in this case, potential ones for mIV/AIDS epidemic.

The problem of the Philippines is not overpopulation. Our birth rate is healthy, not excessive—as the rate required for the healthy replenishment of an appropriate size. Our problem is poverty caused by corruption and anti-competitive, free economy of monopolies. This scenario of administrative to using millions of public funds to buy condoms and contraceptives from multinationals is to distribute to the poor, instead of giving them food, clothes, medicine and jobs.

—RICHARD CHIRINADO,
science writer,
The Constitution,
University of Sto. Tomas,
España, Manila

Forgetful Filipinos

MANY letters from Filipinos deal with their ex-relatives. They say we have very short memories. They are so very pitiable.

It's difficult to accept such criticism. But looking in retrospection, a certain element of what are being said of us...is justified, at least indeed, we seem not to learn from the past.

Look at the recent elections. The President did everything, using good intentions to make sure she'd seem on the winner in the elections, like what happened Ferdinand Marcos did in 1969. She may have been duly proclaimed the winner in the eyes of the world, but the political rallies were the stopping and choking and ignoring points by "act fronts," if not by the candidates themselves.

We have not learned. If we simply have forgotten our lessons.

We even forget to take a look at ourselves as Filipinos. We forget what is happening is going from bad to worse. We forget that as citizens, we have a responsibility to the country. We don't realize and that is to individuals we have the responsibility to be wise as ourselves. We forget that we have the powers made at the ballots. Instead we are gullible.

On the other hand, the responsible thing we forget the lessons from past elections. They did not consolidate their strength. They forget simply by defeated. They forgot, yes, that the number of hand-shakers and the number of people in the rallies do not necessarily translate into votes. And they believed that they were going to win because people around them were taxpayers.

Consider also the way the elections, including the campaign period, were conducted. For incumbents and challengers, popularity or money was the name of the game. In some areas they threatened people. Who set up the political rallies were the stopping and choking and ignoring points by "act fronts," if not by the candidates themselves.

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—JON KAMALIG,
Wanchai, Hong Kong
jonmalig@yahoo.com
(1)altec.com

Convention violators must be held accountable

THE ARTICLE of prisoners of war in Iraq brings to mind the basic laws and conventions relative to the treatment of prisoners of war. International humanitarian laws date back to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. They cover topics on prisoners of war, on the sick and wounded, on belligerents, on hostilities, on flags of truce, on capitulations, on armistices, etc. Despite these conventions or agreements, there were a substantial number of cases of prisoners abuse committed during World War II. Thus, the need for the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Of interest now is the Geneva convention on the treatment of prisoners of war, which implored the prisoners of war convention of 1929. Concerning 143 articles, it took effect on Oct. 21, 1950. The US Senate ratified it on July 6, 1955. Under this convention, maltreatment of, or cruel against the prisoners are prohibited. In all circumstances, prisoners are entitled to respect and honor. They remain full civil respect, to send to all causes are to be preserved against acts of violence or to insults and public curiosity. Reprisals are also prohibited.

The all-encompassing protection is shown in graphic detail in the convention's grave breaches of the convention. The detaining power should be held liable for the following:

—RUEL SOTO
ambassador-millionaire-collector-general
and justice, Ekumenicalism-Cosmopolitan
57 Nieto (2000 Bldg., Emerald Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Snapshot for posterity

I LIED to congratulate and thank former President Corazon Aquino for inviting the Bicentennial candidates to a Mass for Peace and Unity at the San Agustin Church last May 9. The greater she herself prepared is excellent and brief in its homily—truly to point.

The photos on the bicentennial from page last May 11 was a memorable one that we can keep with pride for posterity. President Macapagal-Arroyo was properly dressed and looked dignified. Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Fernando Poe Jr. were in their best, meeting having together and presumably reading the prayer. Bro. Eddie Villanueva did not bow to cap his having but read the prayer anyway.

What ruined the historical photo was Raul Roco who wore an unbuttoned shirt (very informal), not reading the prayer and posing for the camera with sing smile.

Once again, President Aquino, thank you and mabuhay ka!

—FR. FRANCISCO RUIZ,
c/o Mother Ignacia Home for the Elderly,
Dolanda Retreat House,
Inmad, Columbia City 4027

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683311	to	683343	718464	to	718603	806858	to	807127	854904	to	854303	872672	to	874321
683489	to	683512	748869	to	749188	813484	to	813685	854309	to	854428	875146	to	875367
683513	to	683541	748156	to	748750	818186	to	818949	854802	to	855004	878091	to	878790
684589	to	684688	753982	to	754281	822903	to	823302	856032	to	856104	879161	to	879480
685850	to	688149	757175	to	757574	824934	to	825133	856586	to	856835	880982	to	881648
692954	to	693063	762581	to	762830	828999	to	829998	856893	to	857442	882975	to	883171
693021	to	693120	762975	to	763124	841402	to	841405	858191	to	858848	885446	to	885945
698538	to	698587	767110	to	767159	843521	to	843548	858887	to	859019	886052	to	886351
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Across the NATION
Section Editor Tony Binayoda

Power plants sputter in Mindanao

Farmers hit continuous vegetable importation

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Farmers here are up in arms over what they claim is the government's continuing smuggling to their plots to supply the importation that is killing the local vegetable industry.

The most, their ire is directed at Bernabe Gold, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), whom they accused of bringing in his word to help for local industry by not issuing any import permit.

In a letter to May 13, the farmers assailed Gold for issuing 207 import permits since January this year. Those permits, they said, allowed the entry of imported vegetables into the local market, displacing potential buyers for the province's vegetables.

The farmers sent President Macapagal-Arroyo a copy of their protest letter and called for her action.

The farmers even lapsed under the piling rules hopes in the farmers. They passed him on a promise he made on his accession—that by the March 10 to Trinidad Strawberry Festival and the April 25 Montreal Vegetable Congress here—when he declared that he will stop vegetable importation.

Documents show that the 207 import permits Gold approved allowed them to import 5,984,260 kilograms or 9,066 metric tons of vegetables. These covered potatoes (4,628,700 kg), assorted fruits, vegetables (347,000 kg), cauliflowers (2,000 kg), broccoli (34,720 kg) and mushrooms (14,500 kg).

The vegetables come from Vietnam, Australia, Belgium, China, Canada, United States and New Zealand.

The importers included the Philippine Airlines, Asian Development Bank, Universal Robina Corp., Rustan's Supermarket and Liverstop Marketing.

La Trinidad Councilor John Ban, a member of the vegetable anti-smuggling task force here, said Gold's "inaction is the reason for a rift."

"He promised to stop importation and yet he issued 207 import permits," he said.

Ban said the volume of the imported vegetables "is just too much as it has really affected the market for and prices of Benguet vegetables."

He said the 9,066-metric tons of imported vegetables more than exceeded the 2,500 metric tons of vegetables imported in 2002.

"It seems the government is not serious in helping us. The farmers spend too much cost and labor in raising their produce, only to try and with very low market prices," Ban, a newly elected Benguet board member, said. Reiner Enriquez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ILIGAN CITY—Power plants in Mindanao are crashing out one after the other, plunging the island's actual energy generation to only about half of its actual capacity, the National Power Corp. here said on Friday.

Engr. Brandido Dilweik, officer in charge of the Office of the Vice President for Napocor's Mindanao generation unit, said the entire Mindanao grid is generating only 915 megawatts (MW) of power out of its rated capacity of 1,579 MW.

He said from a low power level since this power generation capacity of the hydroelectric plant in Baldoyoc had been reduced. Repairs are also being undertaken in the 1,000 MW Agus 4 hydroelectric power plant here and the 150 MW Power Barge 116, an independent power producer in Davao.

Miranda said water shortage has been hounding the 225-MW Pulangi hydroelectric power plant in Maramag, Bukidnon, which is now generating only 5 MW.

Miranda said the Agus 4 finds relief in power plant is also having problems because of water rubs, where water passes towards the turbines, makes the gate.

He said that they decided to shut down Agus 4 for 30 days effective May 17.

"That's why it is only generating half its capacity," he said.

Miranda said Mapanao capacities have on the average nearly 400 MW of generated power because of the ongoing repairs.

Miranda, however, was quick to add that the projected 400 MW power deficit is not that serious "since the whole Mindanao power capability is still enough to support the island's power needs."

He said Mindanao's daily power needs fluctuate between 600 MW to the expected peak demand of 1,000 MW.

Reports on the power outage is expected to clear on May 20.

Miranda said the Napocor is on guard from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily because it is the expected peak period for power demand.

He admitted that when demand peaks, he "actually cry as it is some serious."

"I is only when the peak demand is reached when we have brownouts, and that does not happen often," Miranda said.

In Ozamiz City the Napocor urged distribution utilities to implement brownouts to manage power demand in their areas.

Annie Orbeta, general manager of Misamis Occidental Rural Electric Cooperative Inc. (MOELCI) said this advisory from Napocor came amid the rapid rise of power outage in the province.

Napocor has been advising MOELCI to keep its load demand within its guaranteed capacity of 6 million kilowatt-hours (MWh) per month.

He said this pruned to be difficult for the distribution utility considering that it is current's running at 8 million MWh.

He said that lately the Napocor has told MOELCI that it will continue brownouts in particular periods of the day to balance the load should the distribution utility continue way beyond its contracted capacity. Rec G. Delupe, with a report from Ryan U. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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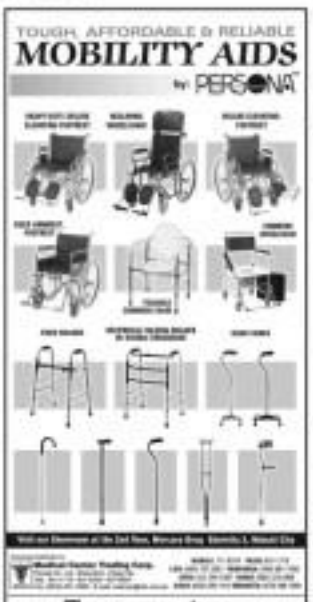
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AFTER THE STORM
Leyte City fisherfolk prepare their nets, hoping to get a good catch after being battered by typhoon "Elvida."

Advocates turn to mayors for alternative education

BACOLOD CITY—While the results of the May 10 presidential election remain hanging, educators are targeting a "education mayor" to reform Philippine education.

Edwin de la Torre, president of the Education for Life Foundation (ELF) and the Liberated Network in Asia, describes "education mayors" as elected government officials who can use an urban area for reforms.

De la Torre, an alliance of educators, activists, and social workers, had campaigned for the election of "education mayors" in various parts of the country.

Bacolod Councilor, Ulay Montinola, said a few weeks to compel local politicians to look up an elementary education fund for the communities, given the national government's failure to satisfy Philippine education's budgetary requirements.

He said Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus had recently addressed the academic needs of his district only days before this year.

Castillo said the search for *De Jesus' replacement will only sideline the Department of Education's ongoing programs and may further delay the country's obligations to two international pacts.

The country signed the World Declaration on Education for All in 1990 in Thailand. The document gave the country a 10-year time frame to improve its standard of education for all Filipino children.

In 2000, the country again signed the Dakar Framework for Action in Africa, which reiterated the 1990 covenant.

De la Torre, former chair of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), said the country failed to reform education because the country misused budgets and could not subsidize all the schools in the country.

He has said if the next local government as the new sources for "education financing."

Castillo said if the members have supported the victory of "education mayors," asking ex-Bacolod Mayor Jerry Javier (of Lakas-Kampi-CMD) whose platform included the formation of a regional college for Iloilo that would provide the lowest tuition, and the purchase of land for new elementary schools.

If he is monitoring issues in Zamboanga Mindoro and Ilocos, which have some of the poorest students in the country and where they campaigned hard for candidates supporting education, Castillo said.

In the Cordillera, E-Net is working with the Association of Bontoc Local Educators Office, a group of Bontoc educators in Mnt. Province, who had failed to reach issue with reelected Bontoc Governor Jose Lacwasan.

Alde had tried to set up a dialogue between Bontoc and school children regarding Bontoc's education platform on April 29, but the lawmaker was not present to attend.

"Alde was actually leading another meeting, also, he had her own education platform, but the candidate was persuaded by the village elders to give way to Bontoc," Castillo said.

Bal Bulos told the Bontoc that she was encouraged to promote a "clean education" and never purchase for her votes, after being briefed about the children's agenda. Vincent Cabreza, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

25 private schools in W. Visayas hike tuition

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Twenty-five private schools in Western Visayas have increased tuition fees by an average of 10 percent this school year, data from the regional office of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) showed.

The number of schools that increased their tuition this school year is more than the 95 schools that raised their fees last year.

But the increase implemented by the 25 schools would bring the tuition rate unit in the region at an average of P600, with the highest at P828.96 and the lowest at P154.86.

Records showed that 12 schools in Negros Occidental have enrolled child in April of their planned increase in their fees this school year. These were the University of St. La Salle-Bacolod, Silliman-Bacolod, Colegio de Bacolod, Bliss Institute, John S. Lacson Colleges Foundation, La Salle College-Victorias, Central Philippine Adventist College, Colegio de Santa Rita, Colegio de San Agustin-Bacolod, West Negros College, Riverside College-Bacolod, International College-Bacolod, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos (UNO-R) and Music Central College.

In Iloilo, nine schools have increased fees. These were the Colegio de San Jose, Columbian Western College, University of Iloilo, ISLCP-Arevalo, ABE International College-Iloilo, Colegio de Jaro-Iloilo Carmen de Jesus, ISLCP-Molo, Western Institute of Technology and Central Philippines University.

The Aklan College and Garcia College of Technology in Aklan and St. Anthony's College and Filamer Christian College in Antique and Capiz, respectively, would also implement fee increases.

The highest increase was being implemented by UNO-R at 20 percent, followed by Silliman per unit at P177.52.

Among the schools that implemented increases in fees, University of Saint La Salle in Bacolod City has the highest rate at P600.39 per unit.

The public has enough grounds to oppose said the increases would spur dropouts and to unemployed dropouts of students.

"This [increase] is burdensome to the students and their parents given the current socio-economic situation of the country," said Christian Jude Mohr, student regional coordinator in Bacolod.

Mohr said they are calling for a moratorium on school fee increases and a higher budget for education.

4 more Dumaguete cops sacked

DUMAGUETE CITY—Four more members of the Dumaguete police were relieved from their posts last week due to suspicion that they were involved in illegal drug activities.

This brought to eight the number of police officers in the city who were sacked because of alleged involvement in the illegal drugs trade. The last four were transferred to different posts after president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo lifted the ban.

The four policemen who were relieved last week were personally seen in the company of suspected drug personalities in the city, according to city police director Supt. Constancio Buenaventura Jr.

Buenaventura, however, declined to identify the policemen so as not to alert them.

Buenaventura said the four policemen will undergo a debriefing session to determine if there is enough evidence against them to file charges in court.

Buenaventura said the police could not expect support from the community if they think there are policemen who are protecting illegal activities. Kerry G. Sinsuelo, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

ELECTION 2004

More poll fraud cases filed

▲A DISTRICT mayoral candidate has asked the court to annul the proclamation of Mayor Eutiquio Elumba who won a fresh mandate in a short encounter of La Castellana, Negros Occidental. Democrito Mirel Jr. filed his petition on Thursday before the regional trial court in La Carlota City in his petition, Democrito asked the reopening of ballot boxes in 20 precincts in La Castellana, so that they could examine and review the votes.

He claimed that Elumba had committed fraud and irregularities during the election such as the tampering of returns, counting of illegal ballots, Elumba, who won in the election by 12,979 votes, described the petition as "a hopeless case and does not aim basis," saying Democrito was merely getting because he and his running mate Rodolfo Alin lost to Elumba and Alin in the May 10 polls. The tally of the La Castellana Municipal Board of Canvassers showed that Elumba had 32,789 votes followed by Democrito with 9,810 votes.

Atty. Celestino Gozum, Silay City police chief is out to file charges against Silay City mayoral candidate Jose Ideaholdings and his three poll watchers for vote-buying. Gozum said the complaint for violating the Omnibus Election Code would be filed before the prosecutor's office in Silay Municipal Hall, when his lawyer under the Lakas Christian Muslim Democrats, denied the allegations. He said that they were treated to establish the situation in Silay which has no problem at present.

When intercepted Mutha Hasa, Black Jolovis Lawrence and Bobbie Abenda in a checkpoint in Barangay Tagaytay, Silay City on May 10. Recovered from them were 259 envelopes, each containing two P500 bills and sample ballots that bore the names of Ideaholdings, the members of the slate, and the senatorial candidates of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats. The total amount seized reached P52,000, said Gozum. The three had admitted that the money and sample ballots came from Ideaholdings, but later retracted their statements.

▲In Tampasa, Davao Oriental, incumbent Mayor Ramon Enriquez and husband, former Mayor Roger Rivera, who both claim to stay or lose to members politician Rodolfo Ty. He instructed, who runs a big landholding in the

Love survives test of fire

By Alma Pol
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—They weren't just smiling, they were laughing. Reporters of Court Judge Ramon Itot Reporter was crackling jokes while he was officiating an otherwise solemn wedding.

"Remember, there's no divorce in the Philippines, unlike in Canada," he warned Henry Tarbe, 32, after he married to Raquel Flores, 29, in a wedding rites at the St. Therese Beach Resort in Dumaguete last Thursday.

It was a happy occasion, but people who attended the ceremony couldn't help but remember the tragic incident that happened the day earlier, when Flores's home which she had rented a week earlier was gutted by fire.

The fire claimed all their possessions, including Flores's wedding gown and Clarke's clothes. Some wedding gifts that had been delivered earlier were also destroyed.

The fire, which started at around 2:20 p.m., was believed to have been caused by faulty electrical wiring. Fire chief Serafin Saavedra said they had initially suspected that it was caused by an electric iron but they soon focused on an overheated electric fan as the culprit.

"Everything is gone, including our passports, airplane tickets and Raquel's immigration papers for Canada. We have to start again from step one," Clark said. The good thing about it, Clarke said, was that nobody got hurt.

Flores, a registered nurse employed in Ontario, and Brown, a construction worker in the city, had become mail-order for six months on the Internet and they decided to tie the knot.

Despite what happened, the couple decided to go on with the wedding, as every child knows, "marriage is forever."

The Dumaguete chapter of the Supermen Cooperative) spirit among Raquel's friends and relatives, who produced a barong (national costume) for the groom and a wedding gown for the bride.

The only thing he saved were the credit cards in his wallet.

Asked how he managed to remain optimistic despite the fire, Clarke said it was his grandmother's influence in him. "She always told us to make something good out of something bad."

And there was another piece of good news: falling through the debris heaps after the fire, they found their wedding bands lying beside each other.

"See, for it signals something good for us," Clarke volunteered.

Miriam regains Ilonggo voters' lost love

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Three years after Ilonggos jeered Miriam Defensor Santiago in the 2001 elections, the former senator now has appeared to have regained the lost love of her countrymen (provincemates).

Santiago got the second highest votes among 48 senatorial candidates in Iloilo, next only to Cagayan de Oro-native Juan Ponce Enrile, and solid Administration ally Ramon Revilla Sr. showed.

Santiago got 152,200 votes next to Ronaa who had 247,954 votes in Iloilo City. She got 511,650 votes following Ronaa who had 807,138 votes in Iloilo province.

Santiago also came second to Ronaa in his home province Capiz and the island province of Guimaras.

Santiago's top ranking might have been buoyed by the strong showing of the K-4 candidate led by President Macapagal-Arroyo and vice presidential candidate Sen. Noli de Castro.

The administration coalition dominated the elections in Iloilo. Its Unang Sigaw (Unang Sabak) is running on 11-1 ticket over the opposition Hanlugbang ng Naghahanong Pilipino (NPC) in Capiz, 9-3 in Iloilo and 10-1 in Iloilo City. One candidate of Aksyon ng Bayan, Perfecto Yasay, who visited his town in Iloilo, landed in the "Magic 12."

During her campaign sorties in Iloilo, Santiago apologized profusely that she could successfully win back her fellow Ilonggos.

"After three years, I think they have realized that I did not gain anything from that political persecution," she said. "I am only trying to her support to deposed President Joseph Estrada during the impeachment trial.

On the contrary she said she gained "a lot of heartaches and political silence."

Santiago was among the 11 senators who refused to open an envelope said to contain evidence against Estrada during the trial. The vote opening of the envelope triggered protests that led to the People Power II uprising.

Santiago had a phenomenal following from Ilonggos during her 1992 presidential campaign especially from the youth. She was next to Fidel Ramos' landslide because of her crusade against graft and corruption.

But her close links with Estrada and her role in the impeachment trial did not have the same effect among many Ilonggos.

But she said her three years of absence from the political crucible helped her because the people saw the difference in the Senate without her.

In explaining her confidence of getting the support of her provincemates, Santiago said she has not lied. "Politicians need to put the very strong politically expansionist culture of Iloilo. Private an unpaved Ilonggo. The Ilonggo pursued to work hard for Ilonggos. If elected because her senatorial bid could be less but busy legislator.

Despite her absence from the political limelight, many Ilonggos who attended the campaign sorties still enthralled by Santiago's sharp wittiness and barrage of quotable quotes.

When mistakenly referred by a reporter as the "only flower among the Senate" in the K-4 senatorial slate, Santiago said she is considered "a thousand flowers in one."

"I am usually called a lion, tiger and wolf but not a flower," she quipped eliciting cheers and laughter. She also quickly added that she felt at home because she was called a "flower."

Canvassers correct errors in report

BACOLOD CITY—The Municipal Board of Canvassers has corrected the erroneous number of votes for 13 senatorial and the 96 party-list candidates in the May 10 elections.

The corrected COC was then included in the COC of the Provincial Board of Canvassers, which was then submitted to the national tally and provincial election supervisor Marsha Lordes.

She said the study of the returns from Negros Occidental showed that the Municipal Board of Canvassers to either the 1000 to Alfredo Lim to make the corrections.

The error in the entries of the Alfredo Lim COC were discovered by Jesus Tajon, poll watcher of senatorial candidate Raul Roco, during the proclamation ceremony of votes.

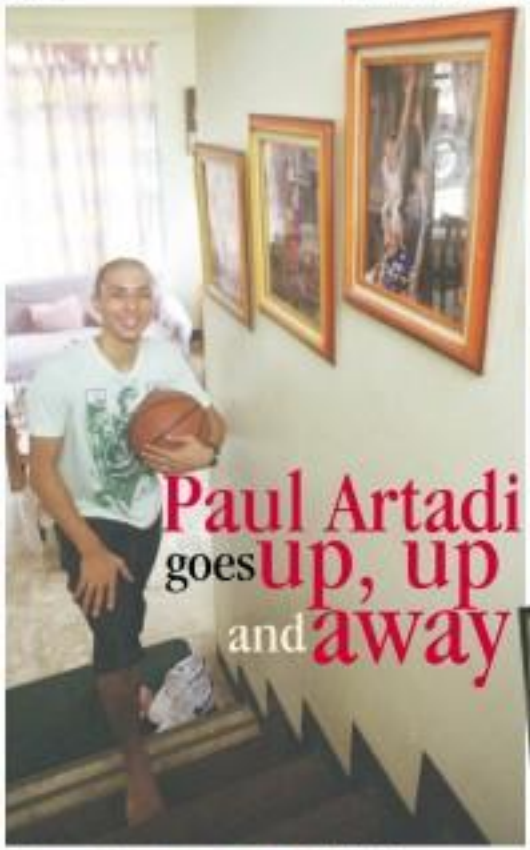
She had questioned why Roco, who had been number one in other El Nortes and voters of Negros Occidental, was number 15 in Alfredo Lim with only 3,003 votes.

When checked, it turned out that Ronaa actually had 13,003 votes. It was then discovered that Ronaa was not the only candidate whose votes were wrongly entered into the Alfredo Lim COC.

The errors also involved other senatorial candidates and some party list groups.

Among those were senatorial candidates Adel Tamano, Ruffy Biazon, Pimentel, Carlos P. Gomez, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

Paul Artadi goes up, up and away



FLOORED. He classes his shoes and their colors according to the players he admires, including the pair below left which he says because Kobe Bryant also wore them.

LONG-ON SHORTS. He likes them baggy.

ON THE WALL. He frames uniforms and photos from his previous teams.

ON THE BALL. He has seen his dream come true.

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Goloy Pancake

MAKING it to the PBA is every basketball player's dream," says Purefoods TJ Hotdogs rookie Paul Artadi, whose own dream has come true. "There's money, fame and popularity in the PBA. But there's also extreme pressure to win. I'll just do what I have to do to stay long."

Paul, who is also one of the ABC Channel 5 Game Boys, confirms that although he has penned a three-year deal with the Hotdogs for P7.2 million in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) 2004 rookie draft, he cannot afford to be complacent.

"The PBA is serious business," Paul, 23, tells Inquirer Entertainment at the Artadi home in San Juan. "Here, you fight for a chance to play on the court."

Paul, who was the 11th overall pick in the PBA, said he play for the University of the East Red Warriors. He was also part of the Welcoat Paintmasters and the Alaska Aces in the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

Paul also played for the Jet Li Sialle Greenbelle Centennials during his elementary and high school days.

The 3-foot-9 Purefoods point guard says he goes to those people for advice: his dad, his manager and his spiritual advisers.

"He always tells me to be conscious of how I score in every game, or people won't forget my playing," Paul says of his dad. Jose. "He tells me to play each game with excitement."

His manager, Charlie Dy, tells Paul "not to let fame get into my head. He says God can take everything away from me in a snap."

And his spiritual advisers, Bro. Eddy Jarlet, reminds him to "offer everything I do to the Lord."

"I've been playing basketball since I was in Grade 4," says Paul. "I don't know what I'd be now if I did not become a basketball player. I might still be studying."

The BS management graduate says he plans to save the money he earns from playing with Purefoods to put up a business someday. "I know I won't be in the PBA forever, so I have to be prepared."

This is why he would rather keep his earnings in a bank than go out on gimmicks and spend on clothes. "I don't go out much," he says. "If I do, I go with teammates and fellow Game Boys James Yap because he knows a lot of places to hang out. Most of the time, I stay at home and watch DVDs. I also visit my girlfriend Maggie Perez), who lives nearby."

Paul says his older brother, 93, 24, is more fashion-conscious than he is. "I borrow clothes from him," says Paul of his brother, who is a commercial model. "He's the one who got me into Converse. He also got me into Nike. I got him a size 10. I wore his shoes even if they are smaller. I'm a 9½. That's when he got mad at me."

Paul is one of the 20 popular young players of the 14 competing PBA teams known as the PBA Game Boys. Other Game Boys will be featured in Dad of the Closet.

Shoes. "My Nike Total 90s are my favorite among my collection. I like them so much that I had a pair bought in the States. We don't sell this particular model here anymore. Whenever I wear this pair, gumpo-gumpo ang pasok ko. That might just be psychological, but it works for me. This is what Jason Kidd wears.

I used to have this in red, black, yellow, blue, black-white and red-black. I gave them away, two to four.

"I use my Nike Cortez for gimmicks. I have all the colors so match all my clothes. I don't like wearing leather shoes so these are the ideal substitutes. They can be worn with anything because they're not too sporty.

"For ordinary training days, I wear Nike Air Court Structures, Kobe Bryant wears them.

"Beginners should go for a reliable brand like Nike. I choose my shoes according to the basketball player I admire. Any player any court is Tony Parker? But when I play point guard, I make sure that my shoes fit me really well, not a size too small or too big."

T-shirts. "Most of my sports shirts are from Nike, my sponsor since 2001. The grey Nike shirt is actual I was starting when my UE team won the championship in 2002.

"I like wearing white shirts in general, but this one with a ball and Nike logo on it is special. This is the first shirt I got from Nike. Look at how dark it has become. It's not for going out anymore. I only wear it at home."

Polos. "My favorite is the striped shirt from Giordano. I prefer wearing right-fit shirts now, too-fast. I prefer brown and blue. I also have collared shirts from Nike."

Sleepwear. "I wear boxer shorts in bed. There's comfortable, especially if you wear old, old shirts with them."

Jeans. "I'm not picky when it comes to jeans. But I prefer fourty-cut pants. They match my right-fit shirts and Nike Converse perfectly. Straight-cut jeans look good with loose shirts and rubber shoes. I have a couple of dozen cut pants from Levi's, Bench, Pierre Cardin, Guess, Rinaldi & Prima, but my favorite is Jean Levi's. Bumili na nasa sale."

Shorts. "My favorite are from Bench. I like the baggy ones. They look good with my Converse, too. When I shop for shorts, I always take into account if they would look good with my shoes."

Perfumes. "If has got to be Lacoste Style in Play! This was a gift from my girlfriend. It's mine. It's perfect for men who are always active...ang bango, Kuya!"

Scrapbook. "If I see articles about me in newspapers or magazines, I clip them. My dad helps me collect clippings. We've been collecting since high school. I also keep my photographer friends in the PBA to take pictures of me. I frame them and mount them on our walls. So far, I have pictures from my UE and Welcoat days, mostly from Purefoods pa."

Basketball problems. "I did not get to keep all my basketball shoes. Nung kami-kami kumbinsi! The only ones I got to keep are my Purefoods uniforms. We have two sets of blues and two sets of whites. Too bad some of them are in the laundry."

NECK AND NECK. He likes "baored"-cut jeans.

FISH, HAM. He bought his 10 fishes' love to fish for P2K

AT THE WHEEL. "There's money, fame and popularity in the PBA but there's also extreme pressure," he says

SCRAPBOOK. He and his father collect clippings

Let legal processes decide election standoff

From page A1

general elections on May 15, leading to the transfer of government to the Congress Party after the humiliating loss of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

With a population of close to one billion and in a society cut in a complex fabric of diverse cultures, ethnicity and religions and parties, India swiftly soothed the stunning defeat of BJP and put to shame the Philippine electoral process, without doubt one of the richest among the world's democracies, rebuilding South Africa.

Senate President Franklin Drilon seeks to complete the national canvass within a week or by the end of the month, but again that the canvass would be delayed emerged following the statements by an opposition stalwart, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., that he would block the adoption of a rule, first implemented in 1992.

The rule provides for the creation of a joint committee that will do a "preliminary canvass" of the votes for president and vice president. A protracted legal battle on the floor over this procedure would result in keeping the nation in suspense.

Preemptive moves

The root of the current fallout preempt the moves by Poe's camp to hijack the election. We has unilaterally proclaimed himself the elected president, on the basis of the opposition IBBP's poll-saying quick count purportedly showing the actor to have beaten Mr Macapagal.

Results of the IBBP count contrast sharply with that of Namfrel which shows Mr Macapagal winning the election. Poe proclaimed himself in the wake of still unreconciled allegations of fraud.

In his proclamation, Poe betrayed contempt of the legal process that is supposed to determine who will be proclaimed president. A protracted legal battle on the floor over this procedure would result in keeping the nation in suspense.

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PNP execs say recruitment on . . .

From page A1

ly on what is officially called "heightened alert." This is one month lower than the full red alert when all troops are confined to barracks.

The two previous false warnings that toppled Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001 involved crowds in the hundreds of thousands, at least.

The grapevine said they believed today's planned opposition prayer actions were a run-up to the "big" rally the size of an Edsa uprising event.

Police intelligence officers have purportedly monitored recruitment in San Juan, Metro Manila and Tayug, Pangasinan.

One of the high-ranking police officers said Poe's camp and the pro-Estrada People's Movement Against Poverty yesterday began mobilizing supporters in the Ilocos component area to Tondo, for a rally in Wakas City at 1 p.m. today.

These areas are known bailiwicks of Estrada, Poe's hometown Tondo.

Outside Metro Manila, reservations were supposedly particularly intense in Cebu, Bicol, Davao.

Members of Sen. Gregorio Honasan's Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. allegedly began recruitment drives more than a week ago.

There a substantial number of people that have mobilized, the opposition will initiate mass actions in Metro Manila and in Baguio, Cebu, Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro cities, according to an intelligence report furnished the inquirer.

"We have the plan and we're ready," the armed officers told the inquirer. "Just wait for their 'false' uprising and they'll be in for a surprise."

Opposition plan

The three officers claimed, one of the two officers claimed, would be part of an elaborate plan by the opposition to sow chaos during the post-election period in anticipation of a Poe defeat.

A military intelligence report claimed that the plot was to begin with prayer vigils that had been planned by the antiabortion group watchdog Pentera, a group composed mainly of church militants.

The other night, vans messages circulated claiming that the group of presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson was planning to flout bike convoys of caravan (CoCa) at the start of the joint congressional canvass at the Batasan Complex today.

The PNP says to push their candidate some truth to the allegation.

The source, who personally led a

To page A2

against the background of a new development, i.e., although the results are not yet official the unofficial quick count has revealed that she has acquired a non-electoral and popular constituency.

If we take the Namfrel count as more reliable than other competing but partisan quick counts, Mr Macapagal has polled more votes than Poe.

If there should be collision in the streets between her supporters and those of the opposition, she can mobilize a mass constituency that should be fatal for the opposition ruthless counter-violence.

Through of a coup attempt in the wake of anarchy and public disorder have to be considered in the light of the question of the military's loyalty. The stability of Mr Macapagal's electoral mandate is not lost on the military leadership.

Serious mistake

It would be a serious mistake on the part of the opposition to overestimate its ability to mobilize mobs to storm the seat of government without a tough response from the government and without a consistently by civilians supporting the government.

The opposition can mobilize mobs of the converted, but the administration can muster mobs to resist legions of the converted. This is the reason it is critically important that the standoff is settled inside the arena of legal processes, even though admittedly close—rather than the streets.

That is why the impasse should not be allowed by the protagonists to get out of hand and lead into anarchy. Compromises and flexibility are needed to defuse tensions and avoid confrontation in the streets.

What seems clear is that with the hardening of positions, democratic elections in the Philippines are becoming tyrannous and redundant as a peaceful mechanism for mediating political and leadership changes. Instead, they have become overture the arena for generating conflict and instigating mob rule that overwhelms people power.

North expressway

Police officials in Central Luzon on Saturday secured the Balintawak toll plaza and other tollgates of the North Luzon Expressway in anticipation of possible large-scale protests in Metro Manila today.

Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police chief, said troops from Bulacan and Pampanga, including Angeles City, had been assigned to various NLEX entry points.

At least 200 additional policemen from six of the region's seven provinces have been readied for deployment, he said.

The Central Luzon police force was put on full red alert starting yesterday.

But Querol said the police had yet to monitor actual movements or preparations by leaders and supporters of Poe for any protest rallies.

Allies of Mr Macapagal yesterday moved to help ease the political tension by appealing for sobriety and restraint in unity.

Liberal Party

The Liberal Party, led by its chair Senate President Franklin Drilon, placed a full-page advertisement in newspapers calling on all political parties to "refrain from making irresponsible statements that seek only to inflame the highly charged political atmosphere."

Drilon said the LP was "concerned, as everyone is concerned," about talk of new destabilization attempts against the administration.

"There is so much unrest and bitterness in the air," he said in a phone interview.

But the opposition was not heeding the appeal.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara said Malacañang's statements, calling the President's opponents "agents of disorder" were an attempt to gag them.

"That's a gag order ... by branding [the opposition's] statements as creating the conditions of the election exercise as well as tension," Angara said in a phone interview.

Mr Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said it was "very possible" that the Senator would proceed.

It would not be Poe and his supporters to start the poisoned political atmosphere.

In a telephone interview Bunye said: "The President has always been for unity and reconciliation, so that we can move forward."

How and when the President planned to contact Poe remained unclear. With reports from Jhel G. Gabuenas, Jess Arnold Tinsay, Phil Central Luzon Desk

Jose Isidro Camacho
Former Secretary of Finance · Banker · Family man · Sportsman

NO COMPROMISE

"There are things in my life that are non-negotiable: my principles, my family, and my health. When it comes to these three, there is absolutely no compromise."

No compromise, most especially in my nutritional supplement. I take **Immuvit** because it has a formulation that does not compromise on quality and efficacy. **Immuvit** is my secret to helping me reach my 100% everyday! How about you?

Are you 100%?

IMMUVIT
More than just a multivitamin!

Only IMMUVIT contains Korean and Siberian Ginsengs • CoQ_{10} • Selenium • Vitamins & Minerals

Congress divided on how to count

Previous page

he agreed with reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., also of the opposition). But it should be Congress in a plenary assembly, not a joint committee, that would canvass the votes for the presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Pimentel said members of the opposition in both the Senate and the House were in tatal outlyanday to make a common stand on the proper schedule they intend their respective counters.

"I agree with Pimentel that we should go directly to the plenary," Angara said. "We'd rather have a direct canvass by Congress as required by the Constitution."

Reminded that former President Fidel Ramos had stated that the proposed rules were just an adoption of those followed during the canvassing for the 1992 and 1998 presidential elections, Angara said the reason's more that's the rule."

Legal precedents

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, however, maintained that there were "enough legal precedents to buttress the argument favoring (the) constitutionality" of a joint committee conducting the canvass.

"First, congressional records will show that with the exception of the 1969 presidential election, all presidential elections contested since 1961 upto 1998 were facilitated by the creation of a joint committee," he said in a statement.

"Second, the records of the proceedings will show that this very same issue was raised by Senator Sen. Rodolfo Ganzon in the joint session of Congress in 1992. The joint session voted in favor of the creation of a joint committee," he said.

This way the "presumption of regularity will prevail insofar as acts of Congress is concerned," Pangilinan said.

He said the Senate leadership welcomed Pimentel's (Senate rules not respected) thesis, but "we do not agree with (them) and/or are optimistic that the joint session after listening to the arguments will vote en banc of the canvass at a joint committee."

Drilon is also confident that members of Congress will be able to resolve the issue.

"Hindi naman sa dapat ang mga miyembro ng kongresonalidad ay may mataas na pinag-aralan,

Gold locket holds Pia's 2 reasons for Senate bid

From page A1

She explained: "It's like having them both with me wherever I go."

Many years ago, Pia had seen a similar chain and locket on someone else. "I thought it was a wonderful way to keep a person's memory alive," she recalled.

When Gabriel was born and she realized he would not be with her for long (he was born with multiple congenital defects), she remembered the locket and was determined to have one. "A few days after Gabriel died, I became obsessed—I scoured the yellow pages and went to several jewelry shops until I found the one that I wanted."

Pia had cut a lock of Gabriel's hair before his body was brought to the crematorium and she—with no choice of On baby—she placed inside that first locket, which was made of yellow gold. "On one side was the first picture ever taken of him," she said, "and on the other side was the last, taken just before he passed away."

She wore it every time that her dad had given her many years ago, when she graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Law.

Dad's memory

Love your when her father died, Pia had the white-gold locket made. Instead of a photograph, she had a photo illustration of Gabriel and the surname embossed on the inside.

Pia and her dad had been great travel mates

From page A1

passions. "Dad and I would go to Hong Kong every December since I was 12," she recounted.

Her last trip there, in December 2003, was an emotional journey since it was the first time that the family had traveled without the late senator.

Checking the bill after dinner in a favorite restaurant, she found herself sobbing. "I always checked the bill for dad before he paid," she remembered.

Irene Cayetano was a treasure of habits. So were to the same tailor, the same restaurant, and the same jewelry store in Hong Kong. "When we go to the jewelry shop, I did not tell the merchants anything, but they asked about my dad," Pia said. "I cried again because he used to buy all my shoes and bracelets."

It was in this same store that Pia found the new white-gold chain and the silver heart.

"The heart reminded me so much of Gabriel," she said. "At the same time, it looked like a turning shoe, which reminded me of my dad and how he pushed and inspired me to do my best in sports."

She reasoned that after Gabriel died, she and her husband Butch joined the San Francisco Marathon 2003. "It motivated speaker said the best way to prepare for competition was to have a reason...a specific person or cause—for doing it. Upon hearing that, I touched the chain, which had only Gabriel's

3 actors in Top 12 of senatorial race

From page A1

Batman "Bong" Revilla Jr. had 11,947,050 votes, putting him in second place, former Pampanga Gov. Manuel "Lito" Lapid landed in the 10th spot, followed by Joggar Estrada, son of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

The Comelec on the proclamation of the new batch of senators at 3 p.m. today at the Philippine International Convention Center, where the Comelec is wrapping up the canvassing.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., however, said the proclamation would be partial, or only for those who had received their spots with a sizeable margin (lest would not be affected by the ongoing CoCs.

The Comelec is counting five more CoCs from Zamboanga City, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Sarangani and Cotabato. The first areas account for 1.4 million registered voters but the Comelec is expecting that only around 70 percent of voters there cast their ballots.

"Definitely there will be a proclamation, but who would be proclaimed depends on the ongoing CoCs," Abalos said expectations after the Comelec en banc met late afternoon yesterday.

Zamboanga City accounts for 365,000 voters; Lanao del Sur, 276,000; Lanao del Norte, 460,000; Sarangani, 225,000; and Cotabato City, 225,000.

Abalos said the CoCs from Lanao [illegible] City were set to arrive last night while those from Sarangani, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur would be in early today.

"If No. 12 and No. 13 spot would have a difference of say 150,000 votes, that no will proclaim because even if one gets 100 percent of the votes and the other zero, it will not affect the difference," he said.

Two ombudsman senators, Rodolfo Biazon and Robert Barbers, are in the 12th and 13th spots, with Biazon (17,685) more ahead.

Manuel Roxas II, who ranked 11th on the manokan of "Mr. Palengke" during the campaign, is No. 1. Presidential bet Aquilino Pimentel Jr. is third.

Others who made it to the Top 12 as of 1:35 a.m. on May 23 were Jamby Madrigal, Richard Gordon, Pia Cayetano, Alfredo Lim, Miriam Defensor Santiago and Juan Ponce Enrile.

The Comelec is required to finish the canvassing for party-list votes by Wednesday.

Winning Isabela candidate tells followers . . .

From page A1

"We pray for everyone to be calm and have faith. God will protect the victory of the people," said Padaca of the Aksyon Demokratiko.

She crushed Isidro's 33-year old Dy political dynasty by beating incumbent Gov. Faustino Dy Jr., national chair of the Nacionalista People's Coalition.

The Comelec's official and final tally in the province's 35 towns and one city on Saturday night showed Padaca with 242,991 votes and Dy with 198,703 votes, for a margin of 44,288 votes.

The poll body's first division suspended Padaca's proclamation after Dy filed a disqualification case that cited the alleged support of the communist-led New People's Army for Padaca's candidacy. Dy also accused Padaca and the NPA of scoring votes in the province.

Garcillano order

Padaca assailed Commissioners Rufino Javier and Virgilio Garcillano, who issued the compulsory restraining order blocking her proclamation. She described the officials' move as a "highly irregular act."

"Our fight will have to be a legal battle that may drag on like the [Fernando] Coddia case in Ilocos City (Mr. opponent's) tentacles reach far and high," Padaca said.

She was referring to the 2001 case in which Leon Ilao, Victoria Loreto contested the proclamation of her rival, former Ormoc City Mayor Eufrocino Codilla Sr., as the city's elected representative of the province's fourth district.

As the narrow-second top poser 5-year- on-ban, Padaca got 57,099 votes.

However, the proclamations of Reyes, the winning fourth district representative Antonio Miranda, and two board members in the district were also suspended.

The Dy camp, Rebol, Padaca's lawyer, questioned the authenticity of the Comelec order, describing it as "dubious" and "highly irregular."

He said she would file today a petition to lift the order suspending the proclamation of Padaca and other winning candidates in the fourth district.

"That alleged resolution is baseless. I am pretty sure," she said.

Comelec Perenda, one of Dy's lawyers, said there was nothing illegal in the issuance of the Comelec order.

Commissioner Garcillano, chair of the provincial board of canvassers, said Hilario Aquino, Comelec director for Cagayan Valley, had verified the order's authenticity.

"There is always the presumption of regularity in the issuance from the commission. In case 5 proclaimed the winning candidates, I will be in the hot seat," Ignacio said.

He said the provincial board of canvassers would wait for the Comelec first division to decide on the matter before they proclaim the winners in Isabela.

"The restraining is expected to summarily rule for the petition[illegible] within seven days," he said.

Fraudulent CoCs

The provincial board of canvassers on Saturday ruled that the certificates of canvass (CoC) prepared in San Agustin and Cordon town were "fraudulent."

The board insisted until a copy of the CoC held by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) as basis for the official tabulation of votes in the two towns.

San Agustin's CoC, which was signed by the municipal board of canvassers, showed Dy with 7,474 votes while Padaca had 1,166. However, copies of the certificate held by Namfrel and Padaca's lawyers showed Padaca with 5,413 votes and Dy with 3,005.

Cordon's CoC showed Dy winning by a 18,000 vote margin while the Namfrel copy showed Padaca won by at least 3,000 votes.

SUERTRES 1 4 6 (Previous numbers)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 9 11 12 42 44 47

METRO
Editor: Antonio S. Manday

2 ex-cagers, comedian make it in Camanava

By Ethel Tandoc Jr.

TWO FORMER basketball players. A comedian. And a local beauty queen.

Apart from the traditional politicians, voters in southern Metro Manila also voted for these people in their councilors.

Of the celebrities that won, it was former cager Jerry Espiritu who finished first after he won as councilor for the first district of Valenzuela City.

Espiritu came in third in the race for the City Council with a 29,720 votes.

First try

It was the first time for the former Ginebra Shell point guard to join politics after a series of injuries forced him to retire early from professional basketball in 2003.

Only 37, Espiritu said his 15 years in a cager helped him win his election.

Elected among PBA fans as 1990's Rookie of the Year, he was portrayed as a model for the youth.

As to his leadership skills, he said he was also since the team captain of Shell. He last played on court in December 2002.

"Bilib mong mabilis pa ako sa basketball, tapos ngayon ako sa mga ka-Barangay. Iisa din naman ang ako sa aking mga mga mga

Miller gives Pacers three-mendous lift

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana—Reggie Miller drilled a clutch-breaking 3-pointer with 31 seconds left to lift Indiana to a 76-74 victory over Detroit Saturday in Game 1 of the National Basketball Association Eastern Conference finals.

Miller's clutch shot—his only basket of the game—was set up by a pick from Jeff Foster, a source whose contributions down the stretch were not as obvious but just as important.

Foster spent most of the contest fighting a losing battle with Ben Wallace and was nowhere near getting free for a driving layup that pulled the Pacers into a 74-74 tie with 1:21 to go.

"He hadn't set a screen on me all night (Saturday)," Miller said. "I just saved half a second of daylight."

Miller said he instinctively saved his teammate.

"Sometimes you have to play possum a bit, act like you're a little wounded. You've got to entice the opponent," he said.

Australian's three-point circled around out, but the Pacers got a response when O'Neal missed two freethrows with 19 seconds left. Chauncey Billups and Rasheed Wallace missed 3-pointers, and Miller sealed a split a freethrow attempt seconds left.

Miller said Foster continued to under just 2-of-11 shots and score eight points. But the top-seeded Pacers needed every one of them to remain unbeaten at home in the playoffs.

O'Neal had 21 points and 14 rebounds and Ron Artest scored 17 points for the Heats, who host game two on Monday.

For most of the game, Hamilton ran Miller trapped. He scored 25 points, most of them on jumpers at key times. Miller is 4 times of seven.

Detroit's Ben Wallace had 11 points, 22 rebounds, five blocks and five assists. Billups scored 13 points but just one in the second half.

"They will not win games (like)," Rasheed Wallace said. "You can guess me on the front page, on the back page, anywhere you want. They will not win games (like)." AP

MILLER runs to allow for long the pivotal three-point basket.

We're peaking—Shaq

O'NEAL

MIAMI (AP)—Shaquille O'Neal has everything on the contest right now. There have been many times in this turbulent season when the Lakers appeared to be spiraling into oblivion, but there big men has been strong.

A day after getting 27 points and 14 rebounds and blocking four shots in a 97-80 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals, O'Neal one-ups the Lakers' latest surge. He scored 30 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and blocked four shots in a 97-80 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals. O'Neal one-ups the Lakers' latest surge.

"I would say we're starting to peak right now," O'Neal said. "We're playing with a lot of confidence and toughness on both ends of the court."

The Timberwolves got a taste of intimidating domination by the 7-foot, 300-pound center, who pounded defenders and even nothing nine of his 11 freethrows, most by the big man. AP

Chess feud: Healing process begins

CLEAN LIVING

Silvestre Allejo

BY JOSEL ung, the Philippine Sportswriters Association and play seeks in patching up the differences between the groups of grandmaster Eugene Torre and his wife, former Senator Leticia Ermita, on one hand and former Philippine president Fernando Campomanes and his underlords, Cielo "Bal" Manalo, on the other.

Bendi Diaz says had said in a recent piece that there is a need for the NSA to compose between Torre and Campomanes in order to reunite them because the country is missing the country's chess players and had not dominated, and the National Chess Federation of the Philippines is disarray and driving away the few remaining sponsors as well.

Some ring Torre, who opened to the first SCFP president, as resigned during last week's FIDE Forum at the Mondo Bendem that the warring groups have already come to terms by making a very positive step to end the controversy.

In the presence of some of his critics—Adonis, GMs Jony Antonio and Rong Villamayor (who also is only in the background during the forum—the 52-year-old Torre said FSCFP president Mel Jerbinson had talked to them to smoke the peace pipe for the good of chess. For starters, both camps agreed to resolve the conflicting schedule of their respective age group tournaments.

Alvendia's camp agreed to reset their age group tournament to June 1 from May 21 in deference to the ongoing National Age Group event. Alvendia also agreed that from now on all official chess communication from should be channeled only through the SCFP office at Rizal's Village to Quezon City and not anywhere else.

Torre said the meeting was cordial and encouraging, adding that it will "lead to reconciliation and peace in our time."

Of the coming July 31 election, Torre said he is not running. "Definitely, I'm not going to run. I'm still in active service and I enjoy playing." But he appealed to chess officials to move on to the future and not dwell on the past. Torre also welcomed Campomanes, who had earlier welcomed him by having no program during his term as NCFP president, asking the former Pole head "to help the local association and start the healing process so that we can work together for a common goal."

The controversy has demoralized the players who have been training for international tournaments, including next month's world chess championship in Tripoli, Libya, where IM Mark Paragua and Asian Zone champion Rosendo Gadero are taking part and next year's Southeast Asian Games which the country is hosting.

Torre said, "The controversy has isolated many potential sponsors and set back the gains we have achieved." Of his critics, Torre said, "Let us help each other instead of destroying one another."

SAGUIC TO REST | Up my list to the parents and their children for supporting the just-ended Mike REST Center chair in Manila. Regarding the graduates of the week-long seminar conducted by head-working coaches Alejandro Dalan and B. Orense. The young members are Mikaid Bardon, 10-and Improved Player-Level 2 (11 years below); Joy Rebecca Galvez, Most Improved Player-Level 1 (12 years above); Leif Jose Ungang, Best in Level 1 (11 years below); and Wilson Christopher Tejano, Best-in-Level 2 (12 years above).

Founded in 1976 by former IM world player Dr. Jorge and his wife debutgirl role, Marlou, the mid-8 awarded Mike REST Center has since become the largest scientific basketball training program in Asia. Mr. and Marlou also staged the first ever Philippine Pawnshop tournament for players 13 to 14 years old in the early 1990s. Organized in July by Pitx, the world's governing body for the game, the Pawnshop tournament serves as the "training field" to youth basketball because it provides aspiring players the opportunity to continue honing their skills prior to reaching the junior qualifying age of 15.

SHELL SUPERSERIES

Big day for kart girls

CARMONA, Cavite—Defending champion Michelle Bumgarner and Alexander Madrigal ruled their respective division records in the third leg of the 2004 MiniRacing Superseries at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

Bumgarner, bogged by engine problems in the past two legs, made a big comeback in the premiere Open class, taking the crucial victory in the final event, tops to win over Mark-Ali Hidalgo(sp?) Allan D'L and Tonio CRO-Cebu Manny Gambrill in the event also sponsored by Bridgestone, Astro Insurance, Eastway Motorcycling Philippines and Dunlop Manufacturing.

The 8-year-old Madrigal showed consistency and confidence to rule the Cadet class over Aurrico Castro and third placer Kiri Mendoza.

Lopez, a virtual first timer in the ET Light division, started last behind Jojo Villena, Jason Go and the highly favored Rusty Sandoz driver, Oliver Aquino and John Paul Mejia.

But softly, soft Lopez was left on the track after 14 laps. Villena called it quits after figuring in a collision on the last lap. Go and Dizon figured in a separate collision five laps later, while Aquino's engine stitches the 18th lap.

Sharing the limelight was Julia Tondilla, who provided over 9-year-old Jori Beatriz and Vito Jose in the 150-Fifth Inch Karting.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
NATIONAL WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION
REGIONAL TRIPARTITE WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY BOARD
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing on the matter of minimum wage adjustment in the National Capital Region is hereby set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board-National Capital Region (RTWPB-NCR) on 10 June 2004 at 1:00 p.m. at the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Women's Center, Tandang Sora Hall, TESDA Complex, East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig, Metro Manila.

All interested parties who may wish to present their position/opposition on the matter are enjoined to attend the public hearing and may file their position papers with the Board on or before the scheduled date of hearing at the RTWPB-NCR Secretariat Room 111-C, 11th Floor, D.E. Antonino Building, cor. T.R. Kalaw & J. Bocobo Streets, Ermita, Manila or send through letter/s number 527-31-58 or email add: wagerus@skyinfine.com.

(Sgd.) DIR. EBRACO A. LAGUNZAD III
Regional Board Chairman

Editor Rodolfa S. Hernandez
Assistant Editor Edwin R. Villanueva

WHAT'S INSIDE

TAULAVA (88) and Monk helplessly watch the ball slip away.

Miller stars anew as Pals topple Kings

By Jane Manaloy

TONIGHT Baiggo grumbled his way but Talk 'N Text still had the last say.

Top favorite Cover Girl gallops to runaway win

By Edwin Villanueva

COVER Girl blew past the pacesetters at the far turn and stormed home to a convincing victory yesterday in the Commerce Cup at the San Lazaro Leisure Park.

Guided to perfection by Efe Saludez, Cover Girl dispatched Speed O'War and Don Pedro with ease then quashed a brief challenge by Medi to win the one-mile race kicking off the Philracom Triple Crown series by four lengths.

"Lumutot ito lang mainit sa mga nauunahan nakin noghapon. Maraming salamat (it just let her kickout the leaders before sending her to the wire). She's a brave horse," said Saludez of the three-year-old her filly who also sent away as the top favorite in post time.

A daughter of Khumasani, Cover Girl handed PI million to the C&E Enterprises of the Marcos family who also took the event, which honored First Philippines chair Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr., last year through Wise Bound.

Cover Girl, whose dam, Gallant Nurse passed away from the birth, negotiated the race in 1:39 flat (24-23.5-24-27.5), a new track record at the Carmona, Cavite racetrack.

"Ang ayos ayos ng feeling (It feels so good)," said Saludez, a newly installed Class A rider, as describing his first victim in the annual contest for three-year-old fillies/gens.

JOCKEY Saludez cracks the whip once though Cover Girl has both ears begin hearing Medi and Speed O'War in the homestretch as yesterday's Cojuangco Cup, first leg of the local Triple Crown series. BOY ESPIA

Saturday following the instructions of trainer Antonio Antonio Jr., whacked Cover Girl at fourth when the gates opened as Speed O'War and Don Pedro battled for the early lead while Medi snatched up third.

"Pagdating ni (the slow to recover, it is) O'Brien ay nauna'ng (he knew that I knew it's already in the bag)," added Saludez, who eased down when Cover Girl crossed the finish line 10 lengths ahead of Speed O'War, bankrolled by Virgilio Garcia, to collect P209,250.

Medi, the fifth favored Shotzie Bargain's entry ridden by Jeffrey Zarate, settled for P76,750, while second pick Speed O'War, handled by Virgilio Garcia, arrived third for P109,250.

Undefeated since its fourth followed by Star Pedro, Cal's Jewel, Undefeated, Modern Spirit, Air Force One and Forgrass Amal. Batangas Power was scratched due to sickness.

Earlier, Cool Runnings, a three-year-old bay filly by Brunswick Cay out of Discovery, was skippered to victory worth P109,000 by Val Dilema.

Asian ladies team golf starts today in Baguio

BAGUIO—Eighteen teams honored by the year-old-now National Golf Association of the Philippines and Manila Southwoods Masters launch first drives for the three-division title at the start today of the Asian Ladies team championship at the challenging Camp John Hay course here.

It will be a showdown between DOHF and Southwoods Masters for the Class A crown at the courses which has Jones, Globe and the Camp John Hay Development Co. as major sponsors and Nestle and Fil-Ipino Sports as minor backers.

The DOHF squad counts on veterans Jazz Lumanta and Frances IRA Cosme to earn medal—or low de facto—while former national ladies champion Mitzi Villanueva, Lois Polintis and Tracy Lozano are at the forefront of the Southwoods entourage. They will be challenged by Ms. Elena and the youthful Apostadero team.

A pro-am tournament is also scheduled in the 54-hole event also featuring competition in Class B and C level nights with tournament chair Bessie Bisil and Freddie Mendoza welcoming participants.

Meh, DOF for marketing of Camp John Hay is extended the support of Metro and Globe for the easy payment that the ceremony to become a high-calibre competition among the best lady amateur golfwomen around the globe.

The participants are billeted at the world-class Camp John Hay Manor.

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Compiled by Tonette Orejas

SANTOS averages 9.9 boards and 16.4 points per game.

GREGORIO: Pals are not ready to offensive.

EGUIO: We were lucky to survive that game.

Miller stars anew as Pals . . .

(continued on page A19)

Jerald Honeycutt powered his way to 31 points and 16 rebounds while Jeri Taldava registered another double-double by scoring 23 and pulling down 12 boards as the Phone Pals stayed in the hunt for the No. 4 quarterfinal slot.

But it was Miller, the league's 2002 MVP who was hailed by Red Bulletins the season started, who was singled out by coach Joel Banal for raising seven tremendous question from the Bullets and Honeycutt in the shaded lane.

"Seriously have to do it. Otherwise, they (Gin Kings) will concentrate on Taldava and Honeycutt in the mid-dle," said Miller after the Phone Pals evened a-three stay tie with the Gin Kings and the Red Bull Barakos at 10-7 behind the second meeting 93-86 of Gerry Golis.

Art Long came in plenty hobbled after a mild case of knee tendonitis but it didn't stop San Miguel Beer from beating Rizal, 120-115, in the other game.

The top seeded Beermen packed up their record to 13-2 while inflicting the Express their 12th defeat in 17 outings.

Already out of the running for the second outright quarterfinal berth, the Gin Kings absorbed their 10th defeat in 17 games. Coach Siot Tanquieng and his wards will now likely finish the eliminations either fifth, sixth or seventh.

Kiko Mirek erupted for 28 points and 18 rebounds while Ilonggo, who departed almost every coquettes call, their were Gerebert's way, added 26 on top of 23 rebounds and eight assists for the Gin Kings, who lost Ronnel Ar-dozol to the injury list.

"There's a very slight chance of re-entering the Sic-3 spot. Our responsibili-ty is to go hard in every game and hope that it will extend against Coke," said Banal of his Phone Pals, who will meet the Tigers on Wednesday.

TALK 'N TEXT (91)—Honeycutt 31, Miller 29, Taldava 23, Pena 19, Alapag 13, Reyes 6, Dela Cruz 2, Ravena 2, Sarol 2.

GINEBRA (86)—Mirek 28, Seigle 26, Caguioa 12, Asaytono 8, Cortez 5, Dillinger 4, Cabagnot 3, Castro 2, Cagulangan 2, Reyes 2, Ildefonso 2, Gamboa 2, Gamalo 2, Capacio 2, Bunol 0.

Quarters: 23-19, 45-47, 69-66, 91-77, 102-

Coaches blast refs for 'lousy' triple OT work

By Jane Navarro

RED Bull Barako coach Yeng Guiao blasted out all possible words to describe their "ugly" triple overtime win over Purefoods and sympathized with losing coach Ryan Gregorio, who branded the officiating as the foulest he had ever seen.

"Our lousy call one after the outcome of a game. In the game, the referees had at least 10 lousy calls," said Gregorio, moments after the 72 Hotdogs triple overtime loss, 141-136, Saturday night at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

And although Gregorio gamely accepted defeat, he told the league's technical officials: "They (the referees) can not ready to officiate. (They should) go back and learn the fundamentals of officiating."

Gregorio exited his tirade on referees Opie Ramos, Renato Pabayo and Joel Mendoza, who officiated the first triple overtime match in more than 10 seasons, while indirectly taking a swipe at PBA technical chief Jerry Martinez.

Guiao agreed with Gregorio.

"It's like they (referees) were hypnotized. They kept calling fouls even though some of them were clear fouls at all. Very judgmental, twice-par lucky to survive this game," said Guiao, whose Barakos made it a franchise trip to against the Hotdogs' 55.

"It became a foul-shooting contest. It's an ob-stard game, crazy, out of this world, an abomi-nation. I didn't want to say anything on the radio and I'm sure (Gregorio) had the same problem," said Guiao.

"Officiating in general has been bad in this tournament. They need to seriously look at it. That's outstanding they said (guest).

Out of the 64 fouls(as counted), Red Bull connected 44 while the Hotdogs sank 36 of 55.

It was a rendezvous high on the on the number of fouls a tournament.

Jim Gamper, James Yap, Kerby Raymundo, Alvin Patrimonio and Ned Arisah of Purefoods and Victor Thomas, German Harp, Mick Pennisi and Jumby Mercado of Red Bull fouled out.

The Beermen, who improved to 10-7 in the season Zone Member Times Conference, and the U-Hotdogs (4-13) duplicated the Sta. Lucia Realty-Sta. Miguel Beer encounter, won by the Realtors, 105-100, on Nov. 8, 1995.

BEFORE AFTER

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MONDAY, MAY 24, 1999

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

Editor Raoul G. Pangalangan
Assistant Editor Connie S. Nebrida

TOSHIBA

Finance seeks audit of ecozone firms

By Philbert Y. Reyes

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance will call for an audit of some companies located in economic zones after detecting possible irregularities in their tax declaration practices.

Economic zone locators, mostly exporters, enjoy various incentives such as exemption from the payment of income taxes. They are, however, subject to the 5-percent gross receipts tax.

Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao said he is thinking that some economic zone locators declared losses that they declared to tax their gross income, reducing in the process their gross receipts tax liability.

"Gross receipts tax should be imposed on the gross income earned. Therefore, deductions on gross income should not be allowed in computing for this gross receipts tax liabilities. I don't know who else do this, but the BOI will (but make a review of this)," Estanislao said.

Estanislao, who is also board member of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, said the DOF needed to plug the possible tax leakages from economic zone locators to prevent aggravating the government's already dire cash financial condition.

Aside from curbing economic zone locators, the finance department also likewise called for prudence in the granting of economic zone status because of the revenue losses that the move can result.

An economic zone locator, such as garment and furniture and shoe manufacturers, which export its finished products for the government. This is the reason, the DOF said, why the Boys should always come up with a cost-benefit analysis of a move to grant an economic zone status to a firm.

"The government should make sure the revenue it will lose from granting an economic status will be compensated by economic benefits from new business operations within the economy," said another finance official.

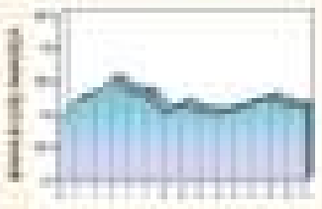
The DOF made the statement following reports the government intended to grant economic zone status to new firms. The Department of Trade and Industry has endorsed to Malacañang the granting of economic status to three new areas—the Boys Technical Inc. complex in Tagaig, Bataan Export Processing Zone in Mariveles, Bataan and the Bataan Technology Park in Bataan.

The DTI said the listing three areas as economic would increase the value of more exports and would boost economic activity in those areas.

The DOF however, said the economy would only be at the losing end if the revenue losses from economic zone locators were higher than the benefits they would provide.

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



May 21, 1999 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.00000	1.00000	39.00000
Japan	100 Yen	0.92719	0.00765	36.16410
United Kingdom	1 Pound	1.60365	1.77260	62.54235
Hong Kong	1 Dollar	0.12819	0.12870	5.00000
Singapore	1 Dollar	0.59266	0.71715	23.12074
Canada	1 Dollar	0.65284	0.71715	25.47076
Germany	1 Deutsche Mark	0.49715	0.54961	19.39019
Australia	1 Dollar	0.67469	0.65000	26.31410
Taiwan	1 Dollar	0.03229	0.03000	1.25931
South Korea	100 Won	0.03229	0.03000	1.25931
France	1 Franc	0.14929	0.16511	5.82231
Indonesia	100 Rupiah	0.00000	0.00011	0.00000
Thailand	1 Baht	0.02600	0.02600	1.01400
UAE	1 Dirham	0.27229	0.27229	10.61931
Malaysia	1 Ringgit	0.26316	0.26316	10.26324
Saudi Arabia	1 Riyal	0.26667	0.26667	10.40000
Bahrain	1 Dinar	2.65252	2.65252	103.44828
Kuwait	1 Dinar	3.24675	3.24675	126.62325
Brunei	1 Dollar	0.59266	0.71715	23.12074
Netherlands	1 Guilder	0.44255	0.49261	17.25945
Switzerland	1 Franc	0.60241	0.67114	23.49419
Italy	1,000 Lira	0.25316	0.28194	9.87324
Sweden	1 Krona	0.12658	0.14094	4.93662

Sluggish trading to persist

(Stock market report on Page 6)

Spin-off of bank trust accounts readied

By Gary C. Bunkan

PHILIPPINE banks will be obliged to spin off or sell some portfolio trust accounts if Acting Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho issues an impending banking regulation requiring them to spin off trust accounts.

BSP Deputy Governor Alfonso Reyes said the instruction is in response of a new regulation on trust accounts now being delivered by an outside expert on banks' fiduciary duties.

Under a proposed circular, the BSP will soon require banks to transfer trust accounts to unit investment trusts, based on a model in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom.

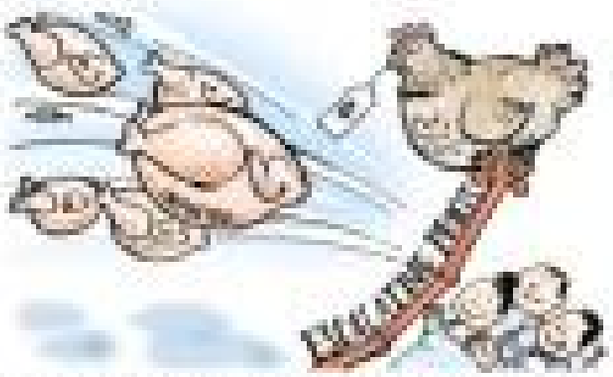
"If you are looking at these countries, there are unit investment trusts with separate portfolio-selling securities or some bonds, so you select what you want to buy and these will probably be listed like mutual funds," said Reyes in an interview at the Philippine Bankers Association Center.

In other words, if you really invest it independently and it will be held by the investors, it is not a deposit," he said.

The Camacho order to address

Gov't allows imports of 10M kilos of chicken to ease shortage

By Christine A. Saplaco



THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture will allow the entry of some 10 million kilos of imported chicken that will temporarily be exempted from the additional special safeguard price duty.

The government is seeking to increase the local supply of chicken and ease the escalating prices in the market by allowing chicken importers access to its share of the minimum access volume (MAV) coverage.

Agriculture Secretary Leo P. Leviste Jr. said Friday that they would be a temporary suspension of Republic Act No. 8800 or the Safeguard Measures Act which says that imported chicken should come in at no less than P54 a kilo.

"I am happy now the landed price of chicken will be at P70 to P74 a kilo of chicken. That is reasonable but there is what we call the trigger price, this would be temporarily lifted," Leviste said in an interview.

He said the allocation of the million kilos will be done on a "first-come, first-served" basis to those who can avail themselves of the MAV coverage before the end of the month.

BPW is the volume of products that local traders may bring in at low tariffs. Imported chicken within and over the MAV allowed volumes are slapped a 40-percent tariff. Local traders have not fully availed themselves of the 12,000 metric tons (MT) volume.

The local poultry raisers, on the other hand, said they have not been consulted by the DA in setting these import volumes.

United Broiler Raisers Association president Gregorio Yap Diego said in an interview that they were taken aback by the DA decision to enter an agreement has been reached since their last meeting on Thursday morning. This is the culmination of backroom talks.

According to Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators Inc. (Pabi) spokesperson Ruben Ancheta, they have rejected the DA request additionally seeking a decrease on the imports since the industry was suffering from high production cost due to the increasing price of feeds.

"Our production cost is at about P60 to P65 due to the high feeds cost, but our farm gate price is at only P50 to P70 a kilo. It is at the very moment that we had gotten our savings up," Diego explained.

Juan Diego noted that the high cost of corn and soybean—the main ingredients in feed production—have risen to P9.5 and P20 a kilo, respectively, as compared to year-ago levels of P8 and P12.

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PAL says it won't raise air fares–just yet

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Airlines said last despite the spiralling cost of fuel, it has no plans yet of increasing its air fares, but a review was already being done on the impact of the continued increase in jet fuel prices on its operations.

The escalating price of aviation fuel was pegged to have driven the PAL's rivals to the extra in recent fiscal year ending last March.

The dominant carrier controlled by tycoon Lucio Tan registered a net loss of about P600 million from April 2003 to March 2004 based on preliminary and unaudited numbers. PAL netted about P300 million from April 2002 to March 2003.

American carriers like Continental Lines, United Airlines, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines and Southwest Airlines have already increased air fares to factor in the increased cost of jet fuel, prompting countries among host countries to that domestic carriers may soon follow.

Public land transport in the Philippines would start reflecting higher fares starting June.

PAL vice president for corporate communications Rolando Tolentino said the airline was still evaluating the extent of the impact of a continued increase in petroleum prices in its operating costs.

"We are closely monitoring the situation. We are studying when options to take," Tolentino said.

The price of aviation fuel had almost doubled to $46.83 a barrel in May from $26.24 a year ago. As of May 13, jet fuel already costs $46.87 a barrel.

A company like PAL spends about a billion pesos each month for fuel alone.

PAL hedges half of its fuel requirements against fluctuating foreign exchange and world crude prices.

Tolentino said that while the situation remained volatile, PAL would rather not increase air fare just yet as it would dampen gradually ever-strong ticket sales.

"Raising rates is not that simple. We also have to factor in impact on our passenger traffic," said the PAL spokesperson.

PAL said it would have to weigh the factors, warning that a fare increase would trigger a downturn in sales and reverse the improving trend that started in the earliest last year.

Its line sales slumped from April to November 2000 because of the deadly pneumonia scare. Other regional concerns over SARS or severe acute respiratory syndrome cased, ticket sales started going up but some of the operations were up due to higher fuel prices.

In the second fiscal year, the flag carrier was looking to book almost P1 billion in net profit in line with the projected global recovery of the aviation industry.

The International Air Transport Association said that the world aviation industry finally recovered in the first quarter, a sign that this year would mark the full recovery of air travel since it got hit badly by a series of events starting with the

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SEEKS LOWER TARIFFS

Toyota plans new Asean joint venture projects

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. (TMPC) has applied for new tariff rates on parts under the new protocol of the Asean Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Industrial Cooperation or AICO scheme.

According to company sources, TMPC has filed a petition with the Tariff Commission to be allowed to get into new Asean ventures with countries like Thailand and Indonesia.

The latest Asean protocol would allow participating companies to enjoy lower tariffs in between transactions.

Adopted in 1996, the AICO scheme is one of Asean's industrial cooperation programs aimed at promoting joint manufacturing ventures between companies based in the region.

The scheme initially allowed participating firms to enjoy tariffs of between zero and 5 percent duty, for other intra-Asean transactions, could not be implemented until 2003.

In its latest request, TMPC asked the Tariff Commission for the company to be allowed "preferential" to avail of the final rate of zero to 20," source said.

Under TMPC's application, the exchange of completely knocked down parts would cover 400 parts from Thailand and 30 parts from Indonesia—all for Corolla and Camry models. In turn, the country would export 34 parts for the 1R-Lite pickup model.

Local participating firms supplied would include Jess Auto parts Philippines Inc., Pupitas Tess Philippines, HDE, Federal-Eight Philippines and TOAsia Rika Philippines.

The sources added that the new Asean partnerships could

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Job creation: US vs. RP

No Free Lunch

DAVID J. HABOLD

Kerry's formula

Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry's job creation formula begins by making it less expensive for U.S. companies to employ more labor where the jobs are needed, within the United States. Thus, he proposes to reserve a generally existing subsidy on foreign investments owned by American companies, which is said to have been an incentive to export jobs. At the same time, the result would be a positive effect on the fiscal deficit that has bothered many economists.

To further make labor employment cheaper for US companies, Kerry wants to further improve the public health care program, thereby relieving employers of some of the burden of responsibility for their workers' medical expenses.

Still another element in Kerry's proposal is a $20 billion tax credit to small businesses to cover payroll taxes on new labor, providing an excellent incentive for them to hire new workers. On top of all this, he proposes to reduce the corporate tax on the top income bracket from 35 to 32.25 percent.

The underlying premise in all this is that the potential for creating new jobs in the US economy will come primarily from targeting firms, for they have the resources to create small businesses. There are not enough jobs to be found in workers themselves. Kerry has not even explicitly set a goal for US firms in creating jobs. The proposed measures, it is hoped, changes the climate to do so. In so doing, it is expected that most desirable wage-paying jobs will be generated enough to drive down the US unemployment rate.

Increasing Filipino jobs

Such classical fiscal measures cannot be of great employment consequence in the Philippine context, where only about half of the total employed workforce in the economy are wage and salary workers. The other half are self-employed workers and unpaid family workers. The lack of interest with the US situation is that there are not enough firms in the formal sector to provide durable wage-paying jobs. Thus, about half of the jobs have traditionally been generated for by the informal or "underground" economy wherein tax policies are irrelevant.

The long-term goal must be to generate more durable and quality jobs in the formal economy, that is, jobs that pay regular wages and salaries and provide the standard package of benefits, by encouraging new investments to set up new businesses or expand existing ones. In the Philippine context, this requires something more than tax cuts. It entails addressing widespread graft and corruption, which significantly raises the cost of doing business in this country. It entails improving the general business environment where consistency of government policies, country-wide work, and stable peace and order can be taken for granted. And it entails increasing the demand for Philippine goods and services by making them competitive in both price and quality in the world markets, and making the country an attractive destination for foreign investors. Taxpayers' money and government subsidies are better devoted to achieving these, rather than picking thousands of short-sighted to create jobs that are not sustainable rather for the economy as well.

Comment welcome at dvhabold@yahoo.com

Gov't to review fiscal, monetary targets

By Michelle V. Perez

THE GOVERNMENT is set to conduct an overall review of its economy's fiscal and monetary targets for the year following the likely negative effects expected due to escalating prices and possible increases in US interest rates.

The Inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) will meet this week to discuss the government's economic targets for possible revisions. The DBCC, which is composed of the National Economic and Development Authority, the Department of Finance and of Budget and Management, and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, is tasked to craft the government's economic policies and targets.

According to Finance Secretary Jesus Jurencio, subject to the DBCC review would be the government's revenue and expenditure programs, as well as the borrowing and lending rates of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Earlier reports also said the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast might also be downgraded.

"We only have to rethink our programs and review them based on current developments that were not factored in when the targets were made," Jurencio told reporters in a meeting.

The Feds earlier said that recent oil price increases might force the DBCC to change this year's inflation target of 4 to 5 percent. Analysts said higher inflation would result in higher-than-programmed government spending, which the DBCC originally set at a maximum of P379.5 billion this year.

Although expenditures was likely to exceed the target, Jurencio said the government was not inclined to revise its budget deficit target of P197.8 billion. He explained that the government would just have to make do with more revenues to match the envisioned higher spending.

"We really have to raise revenues, that is why we are putting pressure on the BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) and the BOC (Bureau of Customs) to collect more. We have there is still more room to improve the revenue generation," Jurencio said.

Besides this, the government has originally set its revenue target at P595.61 billion, assuming that the need to adjust the expenditure program might force the government to increase the revenue collection targets of the BIR and the BOC, both of which contributed more than 80 percent of total government revenues.

The BIR and the BOC were originally asked to collect P497 billion and P112 billion, respectively this year.

Aside from revenues and expenditure targets, Jurencio said the government might also review the BSP's borrowing and lending rates to match the possible adjustment in US interest rates. The US Federal Reserve earlier expressed its intention of raising interest rates.

A rise in US interest rates usually forces the BSP to increase its own policy rates in order to restrain inflation, which could hurt consumers, and not take their money away from the Philippines in favor of the United States.

Shifting investments to the United States will mean higher demand for US dollars and therefore will result in a weaker peso.

Toyota plans new Asean joint venture projects

From page B1

body assembly into a Asean trade in support of the Asean Free Trade Area.

The new measures would allow "further improvement" of economies of scale through the cost-pooling of the Toyota Motor Corp. Toyota envisions of "common-use parts" such as engine and transmission.

Moreover, the proposed deals could help in the transfer of technology to the developing countries of auto parts among the countries involved.

Industry data showed that through the proposed Asean initiatives, the country would export about $23.04 million worth of auto parts from Thailand and $3.73 million from Indonesia.

On the other hand, the Philippines would import $10.1 million worth of parts from Thailand and $2.69 million from Indonesia.

TMPC and Toyota Autoparts Philippines first worked them-selves of parts exports to each other under the Asean scheme in 2000 with transactions OEM parts exchanges with other Toyota firms in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Executive Order No. 185, issued on Feb. 11, 1998, provided that the new Local firms should pay 3 percent tariff on Goodie and Canary parts, and 5 percent duty on utility vehicle parts.

RP, ADB agree on pricing of $200-M currency swap

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT and the Asian Development Bank have finally agreed on the pricing of their delayed currency swap arrangement, paving the way for the deal's signing this week.

"Everything is now clear, and the pricing has been agreed upon. We expect the signing to be held this week," Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong told reporters in a briefing.

The currency swap arrangement should have been put in place last month, but disagreements over pricing between the two parties delayed its implementation. The government was asking for a price that was lower than market rates, but the ADB was offering a commercial rate.

Amatong earlier said the government would not accept the price offered by the ADB because it runs defeating the purpose of the deal being a concessional facility and a support for the Philippine government.

Amatong said the ADB had agreed to reduce its price offering to 60 basis points lower than prevailing market rates. Although it was still higher than the government's original request of a 200-bps discount, Amatong said, the price was already acceptable to the government.

ADB headquarters in Mandaluyong City

The currency swap deal worth $200 million involves the exchange of the Philippine government's peso with ADB's dollars.

Under such as deal, the two parties virtually lend their currencies to each other at an agreed lending price. The 60 bps discount offered by the ADB means that the multilateral bank will virtually lend $200 million to the Philippine government at a rate that is 60 bps lower than what commercial banks are offering.

The peso that will be generated by the ADB from the currency swap deal will be made available by the government to banks which, in turn, will re-extend it to small and medium enterprises.

The dollars that will be generated by the government will be used for its financing requirements for the year.

The currency swap arrangement was approved earlier by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Speeding up the count without computers

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Horacio C. Gutierrez

PETE the maddeningly slow count of the votes in the last elections, there is again a loud cry for computerizing the whole process.

But computers will solve one problem and create at least two more ones. First, a nationwide computerized system is simply too expensive. Even if the government can come up with the money, what do you do with the system in between elections? By the way, the US does not have a fully computerized system. Second, there is no such thing as a foolproof system. Some grade school whiz kid can introduce a virus and wreck the entire network on election day.

Without computers, simply ordering the boxes/ballots can tremendously speed up the counting. Anyway, those boxes/ballots are nothing but government red tape. For example, Stanford is supposed to be furnished a truck-load of a report. Six copies of anything are pure red tape.

The first big box/ballot is the ballot itself. When I voted in Makati, I wrote out 27 names: president, vice president, 8 congressmen, 13 senators, party list, mayor, vice mayor and nine councilors. If I voted in Cainta, I would have written 13 more names: governor, vice governor and 13 board members. That would have been 42 names in all.

Let us make a vote for president, governor and mayor an automatic vote for the official running mate. Aside from speeding up the counting, this will also avoid the problem arising out of electing running mates from different political parties.

Then, we should stop electing senators at large; the Philippines is the only country that does so. Instead, each region will have two senators, elected alternately every three years. Aside from speeding up the counting, each region will be assured of equal representation at the Senate.

Finally, each city and municipality should be divided into districts, each district to be served by a councilor, each province should be divided to as many districts as there are board members.

As a result, in Makati, instead of 27 names, I will write only six: president, congressman, senator, party list, mayor and a councilor. If I were in Cainta, I will write two more names: governor and a board member. Instead of 42, there will only be eight names in the ballot.

With a short ballot like this (Comelec will save a lot in printing expenses too), the precinct-counting can be over by 4 p.m. And think of the amount of wasted work saved by the valiant public school teachers manning the precincts.

The next big box/ballot is the canvassing. Each precinct delivers the ballot box and the report to the city hall or municipio where the canvassing is conducted. The canvass does not start until all the precincts have reported. This is to avoid sandbagging by some candidates. But this process is a throwback to the days of long ago when each neighborhood was serviced by only one precinct. Today, precincts are clustered in schoolhouses, basketball courts or parish buildings. From the reports in Intramuros, the Sofitel barangay hosts downtown Naga City, up to the foothills of Mt. Isarog, are served by four precincts in the barrio schoolhouse.

To speed up the canvassing, the Comelec people assigned to the voting center should canvass the results of the precincts right there in the center. The added advantage is that the canvass will be done in the open—announced and supervised by the entire barangay instead of many hours in public eye, in the secret recesses of the treasurer's office. The canvass should be over in a couple of hours.

What the city hall or municipio eventually canvasses are the results from the voting centers instead of the precincts. The city hall or municipal canvass should be over the morning after the elections. The results are passed on to the provincial capitol for canvassing of the results of the town and cities. The provincial canvass should be over three days after the election.

Since the canvassed results of the votes and counts are out the day after the elections, we won't need the Stanford. This, too, will be a welcome bonus.

Banco de Oro acquires HK remittance company

By Doris C. Dumlao

Banco de Oro Universal Bank has obtained a foothold in Hong Kong by acquiring a remittance center company, to flow heavy in-the-overseas-market.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Alfredo Reyes said the Monetary Board had given BDO the approval to purchase "lock, stock and barrel" Hong Kong-based Hard Rock for P10 million.

BDO spokesperson Hiner Borromeo said the seller was a consortium of Filipino and Hong Kong Chinese businessmen.

He said the name of the remittance business would be changed to BDO Remittance Co. Ltd.

"Until Visayan is a long-existing remittance company. We bought it because it has existing offices in the two major centers and it has an existing client base, rather than starting from zero," Borromeo said.

Aside from the tie-up with overseas banks, the remittance is one the first overseas presence put up by BDO and, that it would not be the last. He said BDO aimed to be a major player in the remittance business.

"We have a natural advantage because of our reach. It's a strength we haven't been capitalizing on for a long time," Serrano said.

"In fact, our remittance businesses are doing very well even without our own remittance companies abroad. Our remittances are growing by leaps and bounds," he said.

Philcomsat sets owners' meet on June 25

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

COMMUNICATIONS firm Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC) said it would finally set a stockholders' meeting on June 25 to comply with an order by the corporate regulator and close its saga of delisting.

It said in a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that its board was meeting next week to confirm management's action on this matter.

It said it could not hold the stockholders' meeting by the end of this month since it has to comply with SEC and Philippine Stock Exchange rules, among which is to distribute to all stockholders copies of proxy and information statements about the planned meeting.

The SEC earlier found that the company which is 40 percent controlled by Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat), has not been conducting its annual stockholders' meeting for electing board directors since 2001.

The SEC last December told the company that it should organize a commission on elections composed of three members.

In its reply last January, Philcomsat directors Philip Ezekiel and Enrique Locsin told the SEC that its directors were "not exercise" to call a stockholders' meeting and that its "inability" to hold one was due to a previous attempt of the group of Cristina Ulanday, Sylvia Estrada Gamboa and Carmelo Africa to convene PHC "without legal basis."

Spin-off of bank . . .

From page B1

pointed out from some investors that there were banks marketing the common trust funds as if these were similar to deposit placements. Unlike deposits which offer fixed yields, CTFs sell for higher yields but risks are borne by the clients.

Virata noted that the transfer out of the funds' banks, however, would result in the swapping of the current requirement on CTFs, which are currently at 2 percent.

"Right now they (clients) think that other market trust departments are marketing are deposit substitutes, so that will be changed. If this is a unit trust, you sell it, market it, that is not a deposit," Virata said.

"But I think there will be a long adjustment period," the BAP chief noted.

While the proposed transfer, Reyes acknowledged that the banks would face problems if they would not be able to collect on the loans and investments where they placed the trust accounts.

"The banks will have to absorb it and take action," Reyes said.

Sluggish trading . . .

From page B1

in anticipation to address supply concerns.

He added that good earnings results in the first quarter also failed to perk up sentiment.

"The outlook is still mixed. We've been volatile in the last months. The market hardly reacted to good first-quarter results," Lang said.

Cesar Cardenas, chief operating officer of online broker 2Tradestation.com, said that trading might be flat this week "unless investors or consumers are being made by appropriate agencies to counter concerns of increasing world crude prices."

"So far, the global picture has taken precedence over domestic political concerns, especially on discussions whether Opec ministers will provide hints to support an increase in crude production. Market players are likely to weigh perceived uneven ratios based on contingencies being adopted by energy bureaus within the Asian region, specifically for economies that are sensitive to crude demand-supply imbalances," the firm said.

Prices of world crude shot up to $41.83 a barrel last week on fears of tight supply and higher demand.

Joris Visser of AB Capital Securities Inc. said that even if oil prices would stop rising, a steady price of $40 for another two months was expected to lead to foreign sales.

Surging oil prices raise costs for companies and dampen consumer spending. Countries like the Philippines, which are particularly dependent on oil imports, are most vulnerable. Already, economic managementers have in the country will be raised starting next month.

"Hopefully, Opec's informal meeting in Amsterdam this weekend could help in boosting production," Visser said.

He added that against this backdrop, investors would watch the effects of surging crude prices on local inflation and interest rates.

"Inflation is climbing, prompting the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to hike its inflation barrage. Market players are now wondering how quickly and how high the BSP would raise interest rates to combat inflation," Visser said.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PAL says . . .

From page B1

Sept. 11, 2001, economic hardships in the United States.

The 280-member association said passenger and cargo traffic posted double-digit increases in the first quarter PAL is a member of the group.

Data on its sixth year of rehabilitation, PAL had reduced its outstanding debt to $1.3 billion from $2.3 billion when it restructured its obligations and went under a 10-year financial rehabilitation in 1998.

The flag carrier nearly collapsed in 1998 in the aftermath of the Asian crisis that struck its major markets in Asia. The problem was compounded by labor problems.

Smart asks PhilEXIM to issue $35M in 12-yr sovereign bonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBAL telephone operator Smart Communications Inc., through its financial adviser JP Morgan Chase, has asked the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency to issue about $35 million worth of 12-year sovereign-backed bonds.

Smart plans to purchase these bonds maturing in 2016 then use them to settle the debts of affiliate Pilipino Telephone Corp., thus, completing a P28.3-billion swap due by the end of the month.

The think of the Philippine Islands and the Land Bank of the Philippines are keen on swapping their Piltel debt with the 12-year government-guaranteed dollar bonds of Smart.

Originally, Smart told Piltel creditors that roughly $65 million worth of bonds maturing in 2016 were available for swap.

PhilEXIM (formerly Trade and Investment Development Corp.) is an attached agency of the finance department that provides guarantees to borrowings of local businesses.

In the note sheet that Smart sent to Piltel creditors last March, it indicated the features of the bond such as the maturity date of June 2016 and 2 percent per annum interest rate.

Other options to retire Piltel's P20.5 billion outstanding debt include cash settlement at a discount, conversion into Smart's medium-term dollar issue at a discount, or exchange into a 10-year debt of Smart.

A successful debt conversion would allow Smart to acquire PLDT's 45 percent stake in Piltel.

The cash-rich subsidiary of PLDT said it would only proceed with the debt conversion if 75 percent of the creditors would agree to any of the options offered.

Smart made the offer on March 21 and gave Piltel's creditors until April 20 to consider the offer.

Failing to solicit sufficient interest on time, Smart extended the deadline to April 30 and again to May 31.

BIR and Land Bank are expected to participate after the Monetary Board agreed to exempt the swap transactions from the dollar sourcebuyer limit. (See related story on *Page B6.*)

BIR and the Land Bank swears for about 20 percent of Piltel's obligations. Without their participation, the Smart-Piltel debt swap may not push through.

CHINA buyers have expressed interest in buying additional mineral materials from the Philippines. From left: Atty Fu Kong Sang, chair of Fulle Inc., Ma Chao, president of Tian Jin Chromite Ore and Stone Resources Corp.; Chen Bo, CEC of China Mineral Resources Product Development; Fu Gui, general manager of export division of Fulle Inc., and Cornelio Q. Casido, chair of Heritage Mining and Resources Corp.

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NBN told to settle unpaid phone bills

By Clarissa S. Batino

ENDURING National Broadcasting Network (formerly People's Television Channel 4) may soon find its phone lines cut off after failing to settle phone bills worth P7.5 million with the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"We have yet to make a final decision when to cut their lines, but if NBN 4 does not address their arrears immediately, then it may come as early as May 24," a PLDT source said.

The source disclosed that part of the TV station's obligations went as far back as early 2003.

NBN-4 runs about 25 lines, each incurring an average monthly bill of P400,000.

Sources said the station's general manager Jose Infante indicated that he would immediately take action to pay the arrears.

The broadcast firm's case with PLDT is not unique. Government agencies are often on the telecom firm's list of delinquent accounts.

As of August 2003, state offices had P2 billion in unpaid obligations to PLDT.

PLDT said its corporate group had been pressing for the collection of receivables from MRT and other companies.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines topped the list of delinquent PLDT clients, with P113.6 million in dues as of August last year followed by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office with P9.065 million.

In 2003, Congress allocated P1.463 billion for "communication expenses."

For this year, some P1.467 billion was allocated for communication expenses in the proposed national budget, slightly higher than last year but still lower than P1.75 billion in 2002.

Other agencies that had a hard time paying their phone bills in previous years were the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which as one joint, had unpaid dues of P50.2 million followed by the Philippine National Police with P37.6 million, the Department of Public Works and Highways-Traffic Engineering Center with P32.1 million, the Social Security System with P32.0 million, the Government Service Insurance System with P21.6 million, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport with P20.9 million, the Department of the Interior and Local Government with P19.2 million, DPWH with P18.6 million, the Department of Education with P13.3 million and the Department of Health with P13.1 million.

Also on the list are the Senate with P14.4 million, the University of the Philippines, P14.3 million and the Department of Transportation and Communication, P13.3 million.

SEC denies landowner's plea to stop NSC sale

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has denied the motion of a landowner to stop the sale of debt-saddled steel company National Steel Corp. to India's Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd.

The SEC said that it saw "no compelling reason" to delay the sale of the assets of the NSC, adding that the sale of the assets was in line with the objectives of NSC's liquidation plan and would protect the interest of the creditors.

Landowner Teofilo Cacho earlier asked the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to stop NSC from including his properties from being taken over by Global.

Cacho claims ownership over 2.4 hectares of land where NSC's billet plant in Iligan City is located. He also demanded P226.85 million in alleged unpaid rentals and claimed that NSC appointed liquidator Danilo Concepcion "has no authority to assume title over the land and ... the mass of assets for liquidation."

He argued that the NSC failed to compensate him for the steel plant's "long occupation" of his property in Iligan City.

Cacho asked the SEC to suspend action on the liquidation plan pending the resolution of his land ownership claims before the regular courts.

The SEC, however, said that the NSC has a valid land title over the property and this has not been cancelled.

Thus, the SEC said the planned sale of NSC assets could push through while the ownership dispute is being resolved.

MB exempts Piltel debt swap from dollar limit

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board has approved the request of the shareholders of Philippine Telephone Corp. to convert their dollar-denominated debt to give way to the debt restructuring of the cellular phone company.

The approval by the BSP, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, sets a policy precedent for foreign exchange transactions arising from corporate rehabilitation.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision Alberto Reyes said the BSP approved the request during its regular meeting Thursday.

"It will facilitate the restructuring of Piltel," he said.

The overbought limit caps banks' dollar exposure to 2.5 per cent of unimpaired capital or $5 million, whichever is lower.

The limit was imposed to restrict banks' hoarding of dollars, which could, in turn, fuel speculative attacks against the local currency.

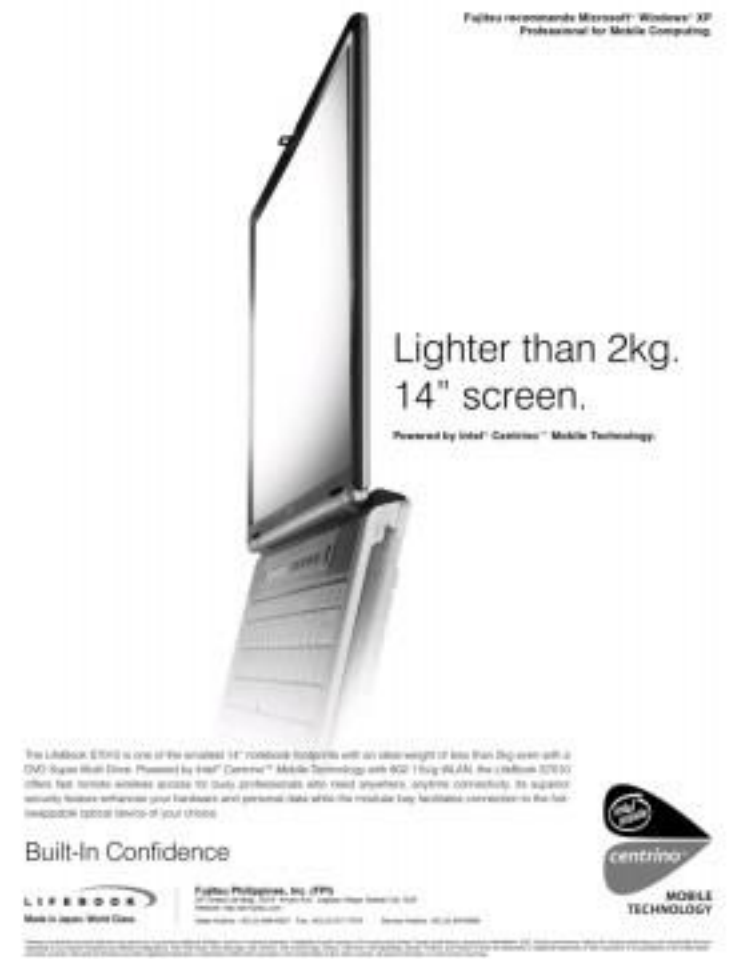
Land Bank of the Philippines and Bank of the Philippine Islands, which account for 20 per cent of Piltel's obligations, are keen on swapping their receivables for the Republic of the Philippines (ROP) bonds maturing in 2019 or the dollar bonds issued by Piltel's cash-rich affiliate Smart Communications Inc. maturing in 2014.

But without the exemption from the BSP, Landbank and BPI would overshoot the overbought limit.

The MB approved the request saying that the debt swap would be favorable to the banks.

The banks' exposure to Piltel would be swapped with exposure to Smart, the cash cow of telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

The BSP said it wanted to make sure that the deal would benefit the banks and that the excess dollar exposure arising from the transaction would not hit sensitive foreign exchange speculation.



Supply problem to hamper coco diesel program

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LACK of a steady supply of raw materials may prevent the government's coco diesel program from taking off.

Philippine Institute of Petroleum (PIP) executive Director Roy Hinojosa said in an interview that supply considerations would be a major problem once the government's coconut methyl ester (CME)-blended diesel program would be imposed on all motorists.

"There have been no assurances, no statement from coconut suppliers that they can do it [meet the potential demand for CME]. The sustainability of supply is a big issue. We can't just do a U-turn once the project is implemented when supply suddenly runs out," he said.

He said the PIP was in constant touch with the Philippine Coconut Authority to get the state firm's feedback on whether it would be feasible for the government to mandate the use of CME-blended diesel, considering supply and demand projections.

The government, through the Malacañang-issued Memorandum Circular 30, mandated the use of CME-blended diesel for at least one percent of the diesel requirements of all government agencies and firms.

But there are also plans to expand the use of coco diesel to include private vehicles.

Energy Undersecretary Eduardo Malaluan said tests on coco diesel are had already been completed, enabling the DOE, other government agencies and industry players to go ahead with all necessary research and field.

"We've completed the test protocols, together with the oil companies, users and engine manufacturers. We're now going ahead with the testing to address issues on warranty, shelf life, and other matters that we have to study and make decisions on. If and when we mandate CME use to all diesel consumers," he said.

He added that the use of coco diesel would encourage farmers to plant more coconut trees, thereby helping boost the country's coconut industry.

DBP seeks BSP nod to become Maynilad trustee

By Christine A. Gaylisa

THE DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines needs the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to become the government's "financial trustee" in the New Maynilad's reorganization.

As the second largest creditor of Maynilad Water Services Inc., with about P8.11 billion in outstanding, DBP was named the governmental creditor and was tasked to represent the MWSS in the new board of Maynilad.

In a comment and manifestation presented in the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 96, DBP said that while it was supportive of the rehabilitation plan of Maynilad Water Services Inc. (MWSI), the bank must find remedy with the grant of guidelines for water and commodities policies of the bank.

"Because the DBP is a government financial institution and is a universal bank with universal commercial bank (UBB) license, it has to adhere to certain rules regarding debt to equity conversions . . . such as investing in a non-allied enterprise such as Maynilad," the bank explained.

DBP's concern said that Maynilad falls under the category of nonessential and supply DOF must seek prior approval with the BSP under current BSP circulars and policies.

There is also a ruling imposed on universal banks under the General Banking Law of year 2000 that investments in a non-allied enterprise is limited to 35 percent.

However, in the Section 24 of the General Banking Law, such equity investments should in Maynilad may be approved under special terms by the Monetary Board.

The Lopez Group's Benpres Holdings Corp., the single biggest shareholder of Maynilad, is arranging debt-for-equity deals with its creditors.

Maynilad now forced to file for corporate rehabilitation after failing to pay close to P14 billion in debts to its credi-

Japanese firm to put up retirement facility in RP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A JAPANESE-AMERICAN joint venture is exploring the possibility of putting up a retirement village for Japanese citizens in the country, according to Trade Secretary Cesar T. Purisima.

The venture, which is scheduled to visit investors in Japan from Monday to Wednesday, said Sanyo Emerson wanted to build here a retirement facility that were similar to the ones they have in Japan.

He said the prospective investor wanted to establish a retirement village in Tagaytay or Clark resorts in Pampanga.

Sanyo Emerson, a joint venture between Japan's Sanyo Electric Co. Ltd. and the United States' Emerson Corp., was formed in 1995 to provide residential health care alternatives for Japan's elderly Filipinos.

The government of Japan is expecting that 27 percent of the country's population will be over 65 years old by 2030.

"Sanyo Emerson is very much interested in putting up such facilities in the Philippines because we have an abundance of care givers and medical professionals," Purisima said.

"Instead of these professionals going to Japan, it would be more convenient for the Japanese elderly to stay here and take advantage of our temperate climate," he added.

Also, Purisima is scheduled to visit the facilities of Mitsubishi Motors Corp. and view the model of the new sport utility vehicle that the auto maker will produce exclusively in the Philippines.

In March, officials of Mitsubishi's local unit announced that the firm was investing P10 billion for the project that calls for the production of at least 200,000 units of the sports utility vehicle within six to seven years from 2006.

Sergio Takase, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. president and chief executive, said beneficiaries of the output would be exported to the Southeast Asian market and possibly to the Middle East, Africa and South America.

Purisima said his visit to Japan was a way of boosting the Japanese trade and investment initiatives in the Philippines. It will also give the government a chance to entice Japanese investors to do more business here.

Japan has become our biggest trading partner in terms of exports and imports for the month of March," he said.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that imports from Japan accounted for 19 percent of the country's total imports in March, amounting to $679.3 million.

Total trade of goods with Japan was valued at $1.86 billion, resulting in a $1-million trade deficit for the country.

PURISIMA

PLDT subsidiary offers new services to Filipinos overseas

By Clarissa S. Santos

PLDT Global, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., is offering new services that allow Filipinos offshore to buy phone cards, pay for landline installations and overseas loan balance gift checks for their families and friends in the Philippines.

Some overseas Filipinos would also enjoy paying their local bills and other Filipino services online via PLDT Global and its Web-based services through www.pldtglobal.com.

PLDT Global aims to make it convenient for Filipinos everywhere, particularly in Hong Kong, to make a call to their loved ones in the Philippines.

"We try to help them take an active role in the lives of their loved ones back home," according to PLDT Global president Alfredo Pandilla.

The official said the global arm of the country's biggest telecom firm had been expanding its presence in key areas like Hong Kong, Singapore, the United States and United Kingdom.

It has also tied up with other carriers to guarantee the seamless of Japan, Canada and Italy.

It also adds PLDT Global's actual business focuses heavily on the Filipino offshore, it also offers products and services for other ethnic groups, including the Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indonesians, according to Pandilla.

PLDT Global operates on three key areas: wholesale voice, enterprise services and retail products, including Jabber Bills and other Filipino services online for recipients in the Philippines.

Wholesale voice involves providing telecom partners with circuit connections to the Philippines and other countries using PLDT facilities. The telecom giant has a stake in a company that owns an international submarine cable system that allows carriers to avail themselves of different connections at the best price.

Enterprise services involve the provisioning of dedicated leased international circuits to corporate partners, particularly those in need of call center solutions.

The retail business offers products and services to the Philippines' close to 8 million overseas workers worldwide.

PNOC unit to choose financial adviser in July

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC Development and Management Corp. (PDMC), the real estate arm of state-run Philippine National Oil Co., will choose its July a financial adviser for the sale of 51 percent of the company's equity to private investors.

In a recent interview, PDMC chair Thelma Lerasan said the commercial would likely be awarded to the chosen financial adviser by July, considering the good response from parties interested to the job. The real estate firm posted P40 million in 2003 net.

"We've gotten a good feedback on the financial adviser contract. We have three or four firms (on our list of choices). We'll finalize this by July," he said.

In late February, PDMC started seeking proposals from prospective financial advisers that would handle the sale of PNOC's 51 percent stake in the firm.

PDMC finance and administration manager Teresita Garcia is said in an earlier interview that among the firms that had expressed interest in the contract were First Metro Investment Corp. and PrimeWater Infrastructure.

The sale of PNOC's 51-percent stake in PDMC is expected to generate at least P1.2 billion, according to company executives based on market value, he said.

He said the financial adviser should make some adjustments on the valuation, which would likely jack up the price of PNOC's PDMC stake.

PNOC's 51 percent stake in the property firm represented around 35 million shares that, Garcia said, would be sold to a foreign firm with local partners.

He related that, as of February, around four entities had already expressed interests in purchasing PNOC's majority stake in PDMC. Among them were a company engaged in real property development and another in transportation.

A final valuation should come a month after the award of the financial advisor contract. After the divestment of the information memorandum to prospective strategic investors, negotiations would then take place.

DTI extends dumping duty on soap materials

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry said it was extending by three years the anti-dumping duties imposed on Chinese soapmaker Hing Soon Ltd. on its importation of ingredients for detergent making.

The safeguard duties were slapped on the following: Kunming Import & Export Corp., $70.22 per metric ton; Yunnan Corporate Industry Co., $53.93 per ton; and other exporters from mainland China, $70.22 per ton.

"We have found that the lifting of the definitive anti-dumping duty on STTP (Sodium Tripolyphosphate) from China's People's Republic of China would result in the continuance or recurrence of the dumping and injury to the local industry," Trade Secretary Cesar T. Purisima said.

STTP is one of the main materials used in the manufacturing of detergents.

The safeguard duties were first imposed in 1999 upon the decision of the Special Committee on Anti-Dumping which is led by the Department of Finance. The duties lapsed in December 2000.

The committee decided to extend the duties due to the complaint filed by Chemphil Allright and Wilson Corp. (CAWC) against the China-based exporters.

In June 2003, CAWC filed a petition with the Tariff Commission for the extension of imposition as well as increases to the anti-dumping duties.

However, Purisima said CAWC was required to make sure that it would be competitive with its counterparts in the region after the three-year extension of the anti-dumping duties.

He added that the commission required CAWC to show proof that it was improving its capacity to produce phosphoric acid that would replace yellow phosphorus from China, both of which are raw materials in producing STTP.

Ronnel W. Domingo

GOINGS-ON

Juico keeps IBC-13 post

PHILCAP (the public share of the Go Tu Sale University Graduate School of Business) (B.S.B.A.) has appointed to appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as chair and CEO of IBC-13.

Juico was named chair and CEO by the Macapagal in February 2001 but he opted to assume the position of vice chair.

Juico plans to fulfill the strategic defined by IBC-13 in the strategic planning sessions is held in August 2003, under his leadership.

Juico is currently the presidential adviser on economic and organizational governance for the implementation of the Enterprise-to-Enterprise Agriculture Policy Program while serving as secretary of agriculture (also from 1987 to 1989 under the Aquino administration.

He is also credited for spearheading the preparation of the first ever Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) as chair of the Philippine Council for Agriculture under former President Fidel V. Ramos, from 1993 to 1998. The plan seeks to systematize and rationalize sports development at all levels.

Eco society invites new members

THE JUNIOR Philippine Economics Society (JPES), the umbrella organization of economics organizations in universities and colleges in the country, is inviting other economics organizations to join the group.

JPES presently has 19 member organizations from 14 universities and colleges in the country.

The JPES is the junior arm of the Philippine Economic Society (PES). It serves as a forum between professional economists and economics students.

The organization aims to establish and promote unity and goodwill among students of economics. It encourages members to strive for excellence in the field of economics and helps create awareness on how to elevate the economic, political, and socio-cultural welfare of the Filipino people.

For questions and inquiries, please contact Abigail Ho, JPES VP for membership, at 0919-6890833 or 0920-6489814, or send an e-mail to JPES_at_pse2003@yahoo.com.ph on or before June 15, 2004.

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PAHIYAS and the beauty of the fiesta /C2

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Bandi-Formoso
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MONDAY ARTS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY ZEST • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY HOME & FASHION • SUNDAY SURPRISES

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts has wisely chosen Bohol, a cultural and natural heritage showcase, to open the National Heritage Month

LOBOC children's rondalla performs Bambanero's Pilin.

Song of Bohol

By Dorcas R. Hudis
Contributor

ELEMENTARY geography teachers taught us about the "small" wonders of Bohol—the Chocolate Hills and, of course, the diminutive but rare Philippine Tarsier. We grew up believing that the only reason we should go to Bohol is to see that cluster of small hillocks of 20 to 50 meters high and to play with those oh so cute 4.5-5 inch and 115-142 gram big-eyed nature. Well, it's not—by any means.

Bohol is a cultural heritage showcase. Its history and culture are so colorful that it was chosen by the National Commission for the Culture and Arts as a fitting venue to hold the opening of the National Heritage Month.

With its theme "Healing in Hong Kapwa/Kinabuhi" (A Tribute to Heritage), the event showcased several activities depicting traditions that are uniquely Boholano.

But before we get into that, here are some fast facts about Bohol.

Bohol is a 4,117 sq. km (1,590 sq. mi) island with a population of over 900,000. According to the locals, Bohol is a derivative of the word "bohu," which means calm waters or waters all over the island. Some, however, say that Bohol came to be after Miguel Lopez de Legazpi spent arriving in the island, asked a native for the name of the place. Confused, the local answered "Bo-ol," referring to the fact that the visitors were standing near it. It was only later after Spain's colonization that the letter "l" was added, making the island's name Bohol.

For the Heritage Month celebrations,

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LET'S FACE IT

Pahiyas and partying

MAY 15 is the feast of San Isidro Labrador. This feast is celebrated in different parts of the country as San Isidro is the patron saint of farmers.

Places like Pulilan in Bulacan and Angono in Rizal mark the day with various rituals, which involve herds of carabao, the farmer's friend and friend.

In the town of Lucban, Quezon, the festival is also consistently known as the Pahiyas. Pahiyas refers to the harvest offered to the saints.

Similar festivities are observed in other Quezon towns such as Tayabas and Sariaya. However, it is Lucban's which is reputed to be the most spectacular.

Our group decided to head out really early to beat the traffic. Actually, the rush-of-dawn schedule made many of the well-meaning members of our group drop out. I had partying the night before and provincial arrivals at sunrise do not go hand in hand!

Understandably it seemed that the suburbs of the Philippines had the same idea! Despite getting up at 5 a.m., it took us forever to get to Lucban because of the rush of vehicles.

We decided on the upland route which took us through the forests of Mt. Banahaw. Along the way we noticed the lush stands of pandan which are made into bongs the town is famous for.

It took great discipline not to stop at the roadside stands which were selling colorful plates like those here. I always insist that one of the joys of travel outside Metro Manila is being able to shop at little stalls along the way.

Of course, my food pictures regarding the necessity of supporting local economies fell on deaf ears.

It turns out we were right not to stop. Despite our early start, we still encountered heavy traffic entering Lucban.

Pahiyas fell on a Saturday this year, hence the heavy turnout. We decided to leave our car and hop into a JEEPNEY.

The river breezes couldn't get through, and we ended up sardining into town.

We were met by our host, Ernie Okawasa, the great-great-grandson of the 19th century painter Vicente Villaamor, who hailed from Lucban.

The CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts talks about 19th century accounts that there were good painters in the Lucban area and that one could learn excellent portraits made by local artists. There are several known works by Villaamor in important art collections like the Bangko Sentrong Pilipinas and the Lopezes.

Clothing is one subtheme discovered by Metropolitan Museum of Manila on the arts of the Southern area. Prof. Ish Pilar brought out a slide of Villaamor's self-portrait. When Ernie stood beside the projected slide, the audience agreed that his resemblance to his ancestor was striking!

Explosion of color

His account of touring about the Pahiyas prepares you for the wonderful explosion of colors as you walk the streets. House fronts were covered with bright décor in the shape of leaves and flowers.

There were garlands of rice stalks, pineapples, ferns, blossoms, ham and fruit, even bread. There were mounds of carabao made of fruit. There were tableaux of farmers. There was also music and dancing.

Critics of the theme say it is just silly extravagance. The point that a relaxed host is that our fronts are showcases of creativity and organization. These talents can be harnessed for other productive projects.

LUCBAN homes are decked proudly and elaborately in colorful kiping

NICE native transformation into a great flavor

Hey, we should develop what a friend calls the Vicente approach to management!

A procession of the statue of San Isidro Labrador passes along select streets. The houses are cleaned up in preparation for the saint's passing.

Legend has it that San Isidro was a farmer who spent hours in church instead of plowing the fields. It was also said that angels plowed his fields for him so that nothing interrupted his praying.

Talk about the ability to delegate!

Wow, if only I had such assistance when it came to my work!

When Diego, his landlord, saw the heavenly outfits of San Isidro's deputies, he was so impressed that he lavish dooms. For this reason, the saint is carried in a float with a kneeling man and an angel plowing a field.

Most of the decorations is dominated by the kiping. This is a leaf-shaped woven sachet of rice flour paste in all different colors.

And guess what? These leaf shapes are then toasted. Yep, after hanging as decorations, they're removed and eaten. Now that's what I call efficient utilization of resources!

In truth, kiping is better eaten, correct us a concept. It tasted of corn chips without salt.

Trivia: Young ones used it tasted of crunchy plastic!

OUR HOST Ernie Okawasa, descendant of 19th-century Lucban painter Vicente Villaamor

HAPPENS difficulty eating my pancit habhab despite being coached by the Linguaneng sisters

Real food

After the nutritious kiping I started looking for real food. A typical dish of Lucban is pancit habhab. Vendors Aling, Corazon and Marlene Linguaneng were kindly enlisted to show me how to eat it.

The noodles are served up luscious-lewd. After a sprinkling of vinegar, one then brings the whole assemble up to one's face with both hands. The resulting image resembles (not too closely) an hippo's extra-animal eating out of a trough, hence the name.

Admittedly, I wasn't too graceful. Noodles were up my nose, into my hair, everywhere but my mouth!

Not being too successful, I tried to make everything down more delicately with patience to manage—a local drink. I must say all joyfully messy and delicious!

We brought some of the local noodles to bring home. We also bought home (a soft bread), cheese and ripasol.

A friend insists ripasol is not necessary to Turkish Delights! You will probably take another article to this one.

We also couldn't resist the fabulous buy which would look great even on the eating Bribi of bread!

One of my comparisons bought a very lifelike frog-shaped bag. Who anyone could resist such a shoulder thing is beyond me.

He says that it will make a good toy for a puppy, but I don't agree. Then again I wonder if this is a reminder than a sweet international phrase dying!

With the incredible galaxy of delights for all the senses, is it any wonder that Filipinos love their fiesta?

E-mail the author at tourmate@philonline.com.ph or add her letters to Philippine Heritage Library, 1880 Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.

LOBOC choral figures group under the baton of Rubio's friend Lyn Ruiz (also choir conductor of Bohol's Island Lyric Ensemble).

BSC Dimson performs on the ancient organ of Loay church.

THE INTERNATIONALLY acclaimed Loboc Children's Choir

Song of Bohol

From page C2

journalists from Manila are brought here by Philippine Airlines and toured around the island's several towns as part of the NCCA efforts to bring to light everything that makes Bohol a cultural and natural heritage showcase.

The tour began with the opening of the New Bachelor Museum Extension, featuring the Unesco World Heritage Alms Exhibit, which features 26 Spanish colonial churches in the country.

According to Annetti Arias, chair of the NCCA Subcommission for Cultural Heritage, there are four sets of the exhibit, the first two of which are shown in Spain.

The tour then moves on to the town of Loay for the unveiling of the national heritage marker of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity which was preceded by the parish priest Antonio Rubio, SVD, Fr. Leon Richard, a Spanish friar who later saved lives in Spain and was martyred by the Republican forces during the civil war, the was beatified five years ago.

Inside the church, guests are treated to a performance by world-renowned organist and pianist Ferdinand Jose Dimson, who is also a professor at the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music.

Next on the itinerary is a visit to the town of Loboc, considered the music capital of Bohol. Elders believe that the name Loboc came from two sources. One is the word "Loboy" or muddy water, and "Loboc," which is the traditional pounding of the rice.

Loboc's love for music has been very evident since the consecration of the oldest church in Bohol, the St. Peter the Apostle, which was already erected in 1602.

According to Lungarlo Labod, artistic director of Team Bohol and head of the National Committee on Brisendo Arts of the NCCA, the church was the first organ and remains known to Boholanos.

During the summer, the seminarians and priests taught solfeggio to the locals. The response to the instruction was overwhelming and it eventually spawned several musical groups, including the famous Loboc Brass Band (1971) and the equally celebrated Loboc Children's Choir. Formed by Alma Fernanda Tirkio in 1981, the choir consists of students from the Loboc Central Elementary School. It won the gold medal in the International Folk Song Competition (Children's Category) last September in Barcelona, Spain. Rubio's unassuming edge is the melodic group composed of kids, which performed a wonderful rendition of the classic Beethoven's Fifth. The performance would have put to shame Jack Black's "School of Rock."

Another testament to the Boholanos' love of music is the Calosoy, being rule by males as a graduation rite for band membership, the Calosoy is a retelling of some of the unknown history—from the time of invasion up to the birth of Jesus Christ. It is held after the Last Supper on Dec. 24 in front of all churchgoers.

LOOKING at the national heritage marker of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Loay, led by Bishop Leo Tumulak

Lovely boat ride

Before the day comes to an end, guests are treated to a boat ride on what seems like a makeshift raft with roofs on top of two small bancas. The ride through and back Loboc River is a definite first since it is the initial performance of the town's theater group. In every stop, different events throughout Bohol's colorful history are served, some of which include the arrival of the first Jesuit missionaries in 1596, the Christianization of Loboc, conflicts between colonizers, etc.

The following day activities also the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker and the city fiesta of Tagbilaran. Bishop Leo Tumulak celebrates the two-hour Mass Fandayana at the Diocesan Cathedral of St. Joseph. The sacred liturgy incorporates Mass settings derived from the 19th century Boholano Mass. A 100-member choir sings the Mass.

Shortly after the Mass, the author-table book, "Iglesia: The Heart of Bohol," is launched at the Bishop's palace.

A collection of personal essays and articles written by those who know Bohol by heart, the book, according to Bishop Tumulak, is "authoritative, timely and primera clase."

Also upbeat: "This book deals with the many facets of Boholano heritage... offers a well of information about its history, culture, and arts."

With that said, our ancestors can finally rest assured that the future generation would continue the treasure's journey of faith while inheriting a rich cultural heritage that is distinct as it is distinguished. And not just mere memories and mementos.

E-mail comments to dennisflle@yahoo.com

ELDERS dance the Kuntiyopingping, a tribute to the Navarra Sisters in the Guadalupe, believed to have made for the local folk when the Loboc choir floods.

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CELEBRATING the National Heritage Month, the Filipino Heritage Foundation, Inc. and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts sponsored the launch of the architectural heritage stamps at the Central Post Office lobby. Culture enthusiast and FHFI treasurer Bambi Harper (second from left) receives first issue stamps from former Antonio de Guzman, OIC postmaster general. With them are Fr. Rodrigo Perez III, OSA, NCCA chair Evelyn Puntig and FHFI president Ramon Rufino.

Art Bermido's stimulating art

By Lito B. Zulueta

ART Bermido's art has taken an surprising twists and turns since he joined the art scene in the late 1980s. Starting as a representational painter, he has shifted more and more to abstraction in recent years. And in opposition to the general observation around, most of abstract expressionistic stuffs, his style has become more and more square and Zen like, as if to reflect any notion of art or style, as if the frugal figures are getting more in the blankness of page or canvas.

In his latest show, "4 feet people at gallery 9," he shows characterial paintings on acid-free papers that abstract personality types. "These paintings play with the audience's imagination because they form figures of men out of seemingly," he says.

The results are intriguing abstractions that hover between stereotyping and individualization.

Bermido calls the works "a character series" from which the viewers may see themselves or see people they meet in everyday life. "With this connection from people, places, things and events, a person or simply an individual is created."

Depending too on the viewer's perception, the results may definitive is related to a large portion of individual. Some of the figures assume larger-than-life proportions—we feel people in the Cubist-leaning imagination.

But in the Bermido lexicography a person is different from an individual. "The former is mindful of his acts, believing that each good deed is a step towards the ultimate end, while the latter is unique in his own special way and embraces the tangible as it passes by the moment."

The distinction, Bermido admits, is a "thin line" that is separated by "oneself—people, events, places and things that could contribute to become either a person or an individual. Therefore is the interacting factor, the duty that is molded into a person or an individual.

Curious but revealing

The distinction is curious but revealing. In defining a person, for example, Bermido seems to denote the essentialism of being. His definition is directional and obviously metaphysical. In contrast, an individual has an element of the accidental in it, of happenstance. If there's purpose here, it is merely the purposelessness of someone who embraces the moment, flowing and subversive as it may be.

In Bermido's art therefore is contained the dynamic of both the representational and the non-representational. The representational is of the directional and the predetermined. The abstraction is in the freedom and the formlessness.

Bermido says that as a student at UST, he was confined to "academic painting."

"EXT is recognized in proportions, light definitions and elemental representations," he explains. Among art theories also interest her had to be representational tools because "abstract art is hard to be appreciated" in such competitions. Although he experimented there with abstractions, it is only now that he is getting free rein in his abstractionist inclinations.

But Bermido himself would be the first to protest any attempt at pigeonholing. He doesn't subscribe to abstraction as a form of minimalism. He explains his style is "beyond minimalism." "In painting, there should be more," he emphasizes.

And perhaps that's the key to his enticing art. A true artist is much like the poet Thom Gunn's fellow: always in motion, crashing no shoulders.—"Time is always sweet by not keeping still."

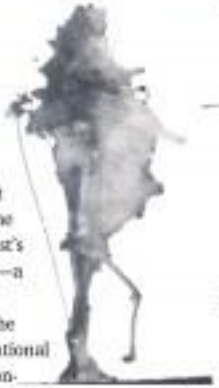
Bermido's therefore explains the perpetually fantasy-breaking, Oriental-fuddling art of Bermido. It is art in motion and perpetually provoked by stimulating experiences. Experience, in fact, according to him, is "the major influence" in his art.

The rugged and unbossed character of experience is mirrored in Bermido's own person (or it is its individuality?). Side by side with his art-making, he is taking up law at the UST Faculty of Civil Law. Why does he do it? "I don't know," he says. "Maybe fate will someday answer that."

"4 feet people at gallery 9" will open at 6:30 p.m. on May 27 at Gallery nine (A/F 104 Mcginnis). Call 8577552.

"MEMORY"

ART Bermido


"POLICY"

"JESTER"

"ROBOTZER"

"SINGING Parsons Sky," by 15-year-old Passion "Nina" Maestrarian/Mayorista

"THE VISITOR," by 15-year-old Jenny Villagracia Conde

Photo exhibit of art's uselessness at Tavern

A PHOTO exhibit dubbed "All Art Is Quite Useless" is slated this May 29 at the Tavern on the Square in Greenbelt 3.

The exhibit displays works of Annie Miguel "Mike" A. Zobel, Jenna Dilagostin Cenzo and Jeanne "Jena" Bonifacio Montecin, three high school students from Ateneo de Manila, Brent and Puerto Tabudlo-an, respectively.

While the main feature of the exhibit will be their photographs, the show still have a small section for their friends' artistic and poetic works. Also on exhibit are fashion designs by Nina Bandojas.

Bands will perform during the opening.

The title is taken from Oscar Wilde's infamous essay that, while dismissing the utility of art, credits it because it is useless in life.

Mall art shows celebrate blooms of May

TOP MANILA artists did an on-the-spot painting session of flowers as part of "The Flower Fest" activities at the 2/L of The Podium in Ortigas Center over the weekend.

The artists were Eig de Pio, Cielo Magno, Jun Vicuguo, Arol Cuhi, Wilfredo Arbajos, Dominic Rubio, Bernie Ray Acida, Jeromie Francisco, Alberto Bon Bonito, Gino Thomas, Edwin Bautista. Bivouacked and members of the Salamanca Group of Artists.

As part of "The Flower Fest" activities organized by Galeria Joaquin in cooperation with The Podium, two exhibits have been unveiled: "Nature," featuring selected works by the international flower-renowned artist Amelia Santos at the 2/L, and "The Flower Universe," featuring the works of the Gerimiers Group of artists and friends at the tower ground floor.

"STILL Life on Blue," by Tito Bajualos

Flowers at Joaquin, the grotesque at Lopez

"SEATED Figure," by Reg Rivilosis

"WRONG Keys for the Peacock," by Alfonso Ossorio

"PHOENIX," by Eileen Bondoc-Society

The odyssey of 'Troy'

By Alexis Lobver
Contributor

IT WAS a scene that was more Kentucky Derby than Trojan War.

Wolfgang Petersen, the director of "Troy," the cruel's big budget entry in the "Gladiator" movie "Lawrence of Arabia" box-office heroics race, was prepping a shot with Sir Ian, Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom and Eric Bana, all on horseback, and Pitt, playing the legendary warrior Achilles, was to arrive at the gates of Troy in a chariot drawn by two horses, and then hop off.

Pitt insisted on riding the chariot himself—something that worried his director.

"It's very, very dangerous if you are on a chariot," Petersen tells the Inquirer in New York, where he's promoting the film. "If the horses get frightened and they take off, there's nothing you can do about it. They just go full speed," he adds in the high, Germanic-accented voice that has inspired endearing impersonations from his cast.

So Pitt maneuvered his chariot to its mark, he missed his hooves in to stop, and get off. Suddenly, the stands near all freakouts on the track.

"The horses got frightened and they ran off," Wolfgang retells, aghast. "And it was just pure luck that he was last on, because they were gone all the way for miles, at full speed. And they never came back. Imagine, he would have been on the chariot. He could not have stopped them anymore."

Hollywood chariot

While Pitt didn't go Mach on eleventh chariot, the event pretty much sums up the experience of shooting "Troy," after all, with a Hollywood chariot this big—"Troy" reportedly cost at least $200 million—and a $45-million star on it, you tend to make sure you don't a runaway hit. And not when other "Troy" have.

Inspired by Homer's "The Iliad"—see, that "Iliad"—"Troy" is an ambitious undertaking that's an epic and battle-scarred as the story it's adapted from.

But there were doesn't all during filmmaking days, with the tale of the legendary Achilles, who is despatched by Agamemnon to retrieve his brother's wife, Helen, after she eloped away with Prince Paris of Troy. You, of course, made. Agamemnon's bloodthirsty desire to conquer Troy, thus setting into motion a war that has lit—if myth is factual short—the bunch-ingold thousand ships.

"It's so fresh, I have to step back and look at it again and relax about it," says Petersen about the finished film.

A congenial man with gray hair and a fatherly demeanor, the director had just the final touches on "Troy" days before it was screened for the press in New York. Indeed, he still seemed quite shell-shocked as he sat down for this interview in a hotel right off Central Park.

"It was 4 months of 19 months without one not," he adds. "Not even a Sunday off. It was an incredible epic journey—by far the most difficult and no-knew (because challenging and satisfying. You doesn't come along too often in your life as a filmmaker."

Screenwriter David Benioff penned the script to a 9-hour film executive in late 2001. "In the young screenwriter, it felt like Indiana Rushing on his second funnel to a command of pound, [took us] to shelling, [he] only-written one screenplay before this, Spike Lee's '25th Hour,' which was based on his novel.)

"I read it and I was terrified because it was the first time I was ever pitching anything," says Benioff, whose sprinkle brown hair and button-down shirt make him look more like a grad student than a big-shot screenwriter. "I told him the story in about five minutes, until he didn't seem to enjoy. I thought it was a disaster. And at the end of the meeting, he said, 'Are you ready to start writing?'"

The odyssey of 'Troy'

To homepage C2

Bottoff was paid $150,000—mostly by Hollywood standards, but something that apparently worked to the writer's credit.

"Warner Bros. put him for cheap," Pitt tells this reporter. "[They] asked him what he wanted to do and he said, 'I wanna do a little thing called The Iliad,' and it goes into this."

Hammering out the script, though, was a battle in itself. Bottoff eschewed all Olympian and godly references, choosing instead to focus on the human aspects of the tale. "I had a very definitive idea of where I wanted to go, and I wanted to strip it down to the human element. And since I started writing, I really kind of forgot about my fear of trying to critique one of the world's great pieces of literature."

High-profile cast

Petersen came on board in early 2002, and he was gratified that not only did he have a script that he liked, but that he had the same line thing as a done deal: a high-profile cast practically lining up for parts.

Early on, Pitt expressed an interest in playing Achilles—something that undoubtedly helped the project get the green light. Petersen says he didn't even have to think long about casting Achilles because Pitt was interested right away.

"There were several reasons," says Pitt, who now looks sun-drenched from his character-based shoot in the golden-toned glare and wearing a tight yellow-and-gray-striped shirt that makes him seem like he's going to the nearby grocery. "I loved his flight, this tyrant, this search for some kind of meaning in his life, this decision he comes make for some kind of kind of glory."

In person, Pitt looks less like Timothée—or candy, and more like a bath-of-the-school-boy hipster. He chides his leg like an angry schoolboy would when spanking; it's enough to scuttle the table and topple the reporter's tape recorder. He also seems genuinely engaged, if tired, while doing these press interviews.

Petersen is behind the camera, but he takes on something, I guess, in dealing with the great divisions that surround us all on from," he adds. "I had not worked for two years and it came along and it just spoke to me. It felt like the right thing to do. It felt like something really difficult to take on, and it was gonna take a lot of work, I knew it was. I was really hungry for that at the time."

Once the director and the star got together, it was clear the two would be typical match. Over heavy German food and beer, Petersen and Pitt discussed the project.

"And when I heard how obsessed he was with the part," Petersen remembers, "that I knew this would work."

It also helped that the other actors interviewed in the film, Eric Bana, who was then gearing up for the release of the much-anticipated—but ultimately disappointing—movie version of "Hulk," wasn't gunning for the part of Achilles. He wanted to play Prince Hector of Troy, Achilles' arch-rival.

"We were very lucky. Brad really, really wanted to play Achilles, and I really, really wanted to play Hector," says Bana, who got his start doing sketch comedy in his native Melbourne.

This pleased the director, who seemed to be dreading a showdown between the two for the part of Achilles.

Bana adds: "What I like was Wolfgang, he said, 'So, which character did you like?' And I said, I honestly, truly do. And he said, 'Well, that's great. Because Brad wants to play Achilles.'"

With Orlando Bloom, last ill-winning streak with "The Lord of the Rings" films and an upcoming starring role in "Pirates of the Caribbean," on board, all that was left was casting Helen.

Not finding the face that would launch a thousand ships would entail a search that eventually lasted well over two thousand auditions.

Enter German actress Diane Kruger, who was the one put through the ringer before being offered the part. Aside from testing, countless times over several months, she was actually asked to gain weight in order to appear more voluptuous—perhaps of small-time chunk-ness.

"When I finally got it, it was like I had done several big humanly physically possible to get this part," she says with a sigh. "It comes to a point where it's just a physical thing—you can't do anything about it. They're gonna love you or they're not. So when they hired me, I was relieved and excited. But it was not much that went on for too long."

Harsh conditions

Shooting the film seemed like an epic endeavor in itself. The cast endured months of harsh conditions in locations such as Malta and Mexico. If they weren't subjected to hundred-degree temperatures—Malta was apparently experiencing an unprecedented heat wave—they were holding fort as hurricanes pummeled the Mexican coast and tornadoes flattened Malta.

The production also had to set a plan to shoot in Morocco—a costly decision—and legroad is to likewise after the political situation in Iraq made it clear that a war with the US was imminent.

Then there was Pitt's injury—to his Achilles tendon, of all creatures—that sidelined the production for several months while he waited to heal before shooting more final battle scenes.

Those scenes, which seem like a climax down to a film littered with them, weren't easy to prepare for. Pitt, Bana and Bloom trained with specialists—including martial artist, gymnasts and Grupo de Ichili performers—for about eight weeks in England before shooting their scenes.

All this monstrous preparation, however, didn't deter some nasty bloodshed on the set. At one point, Bana, while shooting his climactic melee with Pitt's Achilles, got sheathed in the face, leaving him with a crushed, bloody nose and a bad back injury.

"He fell down to the ground and had to be taken care of medically," Petersen recalls. "And about two hours later, he was back to fighting."

"Brad's gave me a good shot in my nose," Bana says, laughing. "I got spoiled a bit. You don't do those fights and without there being some danger. I'm safety was up to me, and my safety was up to him. So we just had to look out for each other. We just went for it."

Controlling these swirls of events, under such oppressive conditions, required a tremendous amount of concentration, something that says Petersen had in abundance. "He was amazing. We would have sets crew of 200 with a thousand extras, and there under them the beach you'd have another crew with the same amount of people. And he's gotta keep track of all of this. He was fantastic. What you see up there is really his vision."

It was a vision, Petersen says, that he hoped would pay homage to the films of David Lean, a key inspiration to the director. In fact, Petersen winks at the audience by casting Jess David Lean—son John Clabelle as Achilles' brother and Peter O'Toole as King Priam of Troy. ("I hope it obliges," is how the gracious O'Toole responds to this nod.)

Poignant scene

Of all the scenes, though, it is O'Toole who steals the film with a poignant scene with Pitt, in which a downcasted King Priam asks for Achilles' mercy in a time of war. O'Toole recalls that Pitt was quite uncertain at first—this was, after all, a scene with Lawrence of Arabia himself—but the young actor finally stepped up to the plate.

"He was a little bit diffident to begin with," O'Toole says. "I said to take the lead. And then I watched him in rut-taking the branch, and I could follow him. Young Brad Pitt just grew and grew and grew throughout the shooting of it. Actors—we are entirely dependent on each other. And I hope I didn't let him down, and he certainly didn't let me down."

While the emotionally intense scenes were the most difficult to direct, it was the physically intense ones that presented the most future. Screenwriter Ron Bottoff, who plays a part in the grisly single-fighter underground with Achilles, downplays any notion that Achilles' demise might harbor.

"It's never as it's made out to be," he says of former in which Pitt demonstrates how all that armor actually comes off. "It's very nerve-wracking, you know? It's awkward. And he's married! I've got a boyfriend. You've gotta have a sense of humor about it. But once you've done it, no one cares. Everyone's standing around wondering about lunch."

Pitt says that he's "been doing this long enough that I've used to this scenario of having 10 vampire guys around me with swords." However, he didn't realize that he'd be the only one going au naturel. "Three Greeks, they were naked all the time—it was hot. They played ball naked. They ate naked. They were naked people. And it wasn't my emphasis on it. It wasn't taboo or pantomime, as it eventually is here in America."

In between takes, the cast and crew had different ways to enjoy their downtime. Bragen, Bloom and other cast members regularly hit a local karaoke bar to belt it out. The results were actually half decent.

Kruger says Bloom was "not bad," although she adds that she hasn't seen somebody throw a party when the shoot was over in order to celebrate the end of all that singing.

Pitt, on the other hand, enjoyed the immersive life in Malta, where he lived in a waterfront castle-like abode of a hill and kept to himself.

"It's one of the rarest things we screen do," he says. "But it really helped for this type of film, just to have all that time, and you really give up a lot of our lives. It's a real joy for us, to see all that work when it's all put together."

"How do I feel now about the whole thing as a film?" Petersen asks. "It was the film of my life. Is it good or bad? I don't know. I'd love her."

At this point, with box office returns showing the film at No. 1, you could say the gods have smiled on "Troy."

E-mail the author at showbiz@inquirer.com.ph

EASY RIDERS. The actors spent eight weeks training for the movie's tough action scenes.

BRAD PITT as the buffed, gilded Achilles

ERIC BANA as Prince Hector

PETER O'Toole plays King Priam of Troy

ORLANDO Bloom as Prince Paris and Diane Kruger as the legendary beauty Helen of Troy

BLOOD! Pitt's character ends up in other daring shooting breaks.

SHOOTING was stopped for a few months when Pitt injured his Achilles tendon.

Spanish heritage tour in Intramuros

VISITORS at the PCNP Philippines Chamber in Intramuros, Manila will have a rare opportunity to travel back in time as the Department of Tourism (DOT) celebrates Fiesta ng Pamanang Filipino (Filipino Heritage Festival) until May 31.

The festival is a joint project of the DOT with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Unesco, the Intramuros Administration and the Philippine Tourism Authority during the National Heritage Month.

The Hispanic-style festivities opened in Intramuros on May 15. Led by DOT Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, guests took their cables in a horse-drawn carriage and sipped tinto from Arab Street all the way to the Chamber.

An entourage of men and women in Maria Clara and barong Tagalog attire greeted them with sinsapayan garlands and a dance performed to the tune of flower petals. The symbolic throwing of petals, rice and coins are an invocation for success and bounty.

Michel Jamil Bibel Gan sits at the grand, framed organ and delivers performed by a group of traditional duets.

Culinary delights at intramuros from the 41st kitchens are a form of the festival. Some featured towns will be asked to sell specialties from their places.

A major portion on the left side of the Chamber houses the facades of the heritage churches of San Agustin, Paoay Sto. Maria and Miag-ao, festooned with carving appliqués on wood on the silhouettes of the churches.

The alleys between them serve as activity areas for cole-

ITALIAN Ambassador Ettore to Colosanti having a grand time drinking a cerveza.

SACRA, an exhibition on sacred vessels, religious art and artifacts, wooden saints and carousel furniture.

nial crafts and rituals. An artisan with lifted from the 1925 Madrid booklet on the Manila exception of the pastoral of the newly restored Spanish hang serves as the highlight and barbecue station in the alley.

A long patio reminiscent of colonial celebration of the Corpus Christi (in Bal, Laguna, as done first by José Rizal), is the prime attraction of the rare activity.

The chief alley features a bamboo triumphal arch or sculpture at the Mayonnaise session with elaborate buntings from Hagonoy. The fourth alley exhibits a long dessert, a hallmark of Filipino weddings in Pangasinan, Bulacan, Rizal and Batangas.

The center of the loft tour is highlighted by a reverentation of the ornate baroque altar of the Quiapo Church. It is set as the jewel of a stylized house or of a church interior.

The middle circle of the loft sections calls to mind a church place. A scene pedestal is built supporting a cross traditionally placed by the Spanish missionaries establishing a parish.

The flowers surrounding the cross recall the different plants brought from the New World by the friars: Bandera Española, Mirasol, Alas Quatro, Millo-millo, Sampaguita, etc. The Spanish ring features the New World plants which became prime agricultural products such as maize, tobacco, coffee and cacao.

Church facades

A huge octagonal block serves as the principal focus of the Chamber's Center.

Eight enlarged churches blown up on tarpaulin at heights of 12 feet are featured in the octagon. These are the churches of Binondoc, Catbalogan, Daraga, Boljoon, Sampaloc, Miagao, Jimenez and Lubao.

The exhibit on religious art features collections of religious art and artifacts, censer, wooden carved, sculptural furniture and sacred vessels.

Blown up on tarpaulin and mounted on wood are ornate doors of the Churches of Unisan, Romblon, Binangonan and Hagonoy as well as ornate baroque altars of Boljoon, Pan-Ay, Jimenez, and Sagay.

MORE sacred artifacts on exhibit

The breathtaking tapestry is set and carved ceiling of Taupo and Argao in Cebu, the Ermita Church of Intramuros in Manila are also re-created.

Also included are the shell mosaics of Cebu, the pulpit of Mangaldan and the wood parquet floor of Laoag.

Daily presentations by the Tinikling del Barrio performance will light the galleries.

The National Folk Dance Company will perform in a popular repertoire of the best-loved Philippine dances today.

Other performers the Kuratong del Barrio (May 24), the Philippine Army Band (May 25 and 27), Mandaluyong Children's Choir (May 26), UP Dance Troupe and the UE Band (May 28), and the San Miguel Pilsbar Music Orchestra and San Miguel Master Chorale (May 29).

WELL-EQUIPPED nursery room

MODERN laboratory facilities simulate nursing and health care practices and techniques.

INSTRUCTION is IT-aided.

Calabarzon gets enhanced nursing education

NURSING education in the important Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon) area has received a boost with the opening of the B.S. Nursing program of the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Calamba, Laguna. The program is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education.

The Nursing program, according to Letran-Calamba Rector Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, O.P., is affiliated with the UST Hospital and the UST College of Nursing, which has been declared by the CHED as a Center of Excellence in Nursing education.

The dean is Dr. Alita Ramos-Conde, former head of the UST Hospital and the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

The program is staffed with top teachers and experts in nursing and the allied medical and health-care area. Modern laboratory facilities for hands-on and simulated practice of nursing and the health arts have been constructed.

Instruction is also aided by the latest in information technology.

"The enhanced curriculum is characterized by holistic and well-balanced content. It integrates general education subjects into professional subjects to ensure total human education," Letran officials said.

Through linkages with industries, the students are exposed to professional trends and technologies. Through the Office of Community and Extension Services, students are exposed to social development.

Letran-Calamba is considered the top high-tech educational institution in the Southern Tagalog region. It has produced quality graduates in engineering, the arts and sciences, commerce and accountancy, and graduate studies.

Colegio de San Juan de Letran is located at Brgy. 4, Calamba, Laguna. Call (049) 545-1820 to 1833. Visit www.letran-calamba.edu.ph.

FAÇADE of Letran Calamba

LORENZO Shipside Schools kids enjoy well-rounded education

Parents help ensure quality education

THE LORENZO Ruiz de Manila School (LRMS) at Phase 1, Vista Verde Executive Village, Cainta, Rizal, is implementing a Parent Partnership for Quality Education Program (PPQEP).

The program recognizes the need for substantial parent collaboration for the children's total development.

Through PPQEP, the school, founded by Lydia Cuevas Vicente, aims to help parents understand psychosocial, psychosexual, moral-spiritual, intellectual and physical development. A special committee composed of administrators, faculty, staff, students and parents oversees program implementation.

The program's major thrusts are Effective Parenting, Skills Building, Crisis Management, Health and Recreation, Spiritual and Moral Development.

Through the PPQEP and the support of families and the whole school community, LRMS hopes to produce graduates that are God-loving, conscientious, socially-integrated, emotionally-adjusted and well-rounded citizens.

LYDIA Cuevas-Vicente

SCHOOL facade

EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Teachers to bring classroom 'back to life'

By Butch Hernandez
Contributor

"WE must bring the classroom back to life," national coordinator Dr. Evelyn Mojillano urged ready-set-go public schools participating in a five-day Mentoring the Mentors Seminar Workshop, held recently at the very modern Balay Kanayunan in Sagay City.

The massive building somewhat resembles, loosely, by the Foundation for World-wide People, under its Education Revolution initiative, and the Department of Education through Sagay City superintendent Dr. Mildred Essay.

Mayor Francisco Zamora, chair of the Sagay City Local School Board, hosted the event and provided service board and lodging of 50 principals and head teachers of schools in Sagay, Escalante City and Murcia.

Leah Fuentevilla, president of the Sagay Jaycees, Manuel Alejandro, president of the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA Jaycees), and Susan Jocelyn Ong Un Hiansan, Murcia mom of the Sagay Ladies Circle all thrilled that they shared the PWMD's belief that education was the best weapon against poverty by pioneering widespread community support for the Education Revolution's adopt-A-School and Mentoring the Mentors programs.

ENJOYCHATING teachers work together on build a dream house

SAGAY Sojor

SAGAY City Mayor Francisco Zamora

Competing for attention

Dr. Mojillano, an exemplary educator for 45 years, said, "Today our teachers are competing against multiple media and stimuli for the attention of our students. TV, radio, movies, computers, the Internet and video games, among others, have made their students quite much shorter and their teachers far boredom much greater in the classroom."

Dr. Mojillano facilitated in getting teachers to "unfold" their techniques and helped them learn how easy as they could consistently improve student achievement at all levels of education. The module "Better Teaching and Learning Strategies" was just one of eight topics in the Mentoring the Mentors Seminar Workshop.

During the five days, participating teachers immersed themselves in interactive sessions that challenged both their teaching skills and their group of their physical roles in their classes themselves and their students. In an exercise meant to highlight creativity and teamwork, teachers working in groups tried to build extra towers to see who could put together the most stable structure.

Looking back

Paul Mojillano reflected on what motivated those teachers in the first place to engaged their fellow teachers in the process on desirable traits.

The best, of course, was reserved for last. As the seminar drew to a close and they headed for their various places for their respective schools, it became increasingly clear to the participating teachers that to reap the full benefit of the Mentoring the Mentors sessions, they would have to share their experiences with their fellow teachers, consistently bring out travel, dance to their students, and ultimately give one social change in their communities for the rest of their lives.

The author is the executive director of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power.

PRINCIPALS and mentor-teachers from public schools in Sagay City, Escalante City and Murcia show their support for the Education Revolution with Dr. Evelyn Mojillano, Mentoring the Mentors national coordinator (front row, second from right, in red).

Seminar on academic writing

THE BRITISH Council will hold a three-day seminar-workshop on "Teaching Academic Writing at the Tertiary Level," May 26-28, at the Ateneo Professional Schools Training Center in Rockwell, Power Center.

The workshop aims to enhance English teachers on the nature and format of college writing assignments and on the process approach to writing. It will also discuss current trends in classroom writing and reporting, methodologies in the teaching of academic writing, and assessing students' written work.

Paul Wade, the British Council's business education manager, will conduct the workshop together with English language consultant David Dallyon.

Call the British Council's Education and Information Team at 9340.0111 to 14.

Film version of best 'Potter' book highly anticipated

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SCHOOL wizards

centre J.K. Rowling book, will play Harry for the third time. The other cast, too—the Hermione played by Emma Watson and Ron portrayed by Rupert Grint—you will just not recognize. Dumbledore, the school headmaster, will have some face—if he Michael Gambon, one of Britain's most revered stage actors. The role was earlier enacted by Richard Harris, who died in 2002.

The director for this time has switched hands from Chris Columbus (who directed the earlier two films) to Mexico's Alfonso Cuaron, who has been seen back to be tamed. Movie buff are the critics saying and more united but the music, too, is chillingly eerie.

The film shows Harry and his buddies back at Hogwarts again. As the title suggests, this time around the young hero is confronted by an escaped convict from the prison of Azkaban. The prisoner is Sirius Black, feared by Cory Holman, is believed to have killed Harry's parents and was coming here four he is now pursuing his interests.

Harry comes across as more hostile and troubled, as he fights the demons from outside and within him. He loses an also more pronounced and visible in the film. And, there's late to desert of hair-raising stuff. Retarded by the cutout of death, Harry encounters the Dementors, the cold-blooded Alzkaban guards stationed at Hogwarts, and takes on Dobbers, a test who is actually the wicked Peter Pettigrew.

With all these horrifying goings on in Harry's world, Potter pals couldn't have asked for a treat more magical and theatrical.

The Orlando Sentinel

EMMA Watson is all grown up.

American hails coconut as healthiest oil on earth

The Healing Miracles of Coconut Oil
By Bruce Fife, N.D.
Woodbridge Publications

By Cesar C. Villariba
Contributor

BRUCE Fife, an American, has gone coconuts over coconuts. He says that tropical oil is the healthiest dietary oil on earth.

He will bring his message—"Coconut oil does not produce cholesterol"—in a series of lectures May 28-30.

A certified nutritionist and naturopathic physician, Fife was overwhelmed by the outcome of his research on the much disparaged coconut oil, and has compiled the voluminous medical data into a practical readable book, "The Healing Miracles of Coconut Oil."

Published at the cusp of the millennium, it is just what the coconut country needs to turn around the price spree 20 years ago by a threatened soybean-oil industry which took advantage of the American fear of saturated fat being linked to heart disease.

War of oils

Fife's book is a veritable historical account of the rise and fall of coconut oil on the American dining table—the first and, probably, the last word on the subject from an American perspective.

In the "war of oils," he says the American food industry swallowed the negative report on the coconut hook, line and sinker, despite a lack of sufficient research to establish a definitive link between coconut oil and heart disease. Coconut and palm oils were replaced with hydrogenated soybean oil in processed food.

Worse, both the scientific community and coconut oil's nutritional users were reassured when, were frowned out in the media campaign orchestrated by the American Soybean Association.

Fife says the losers in the war are the consumers because hydrogenated oil turned out to be unhealthy when chemically altered.

Fife's book was already on its second edition in 2004 before it slowly gained the interest of skeptical Filipinos still battling from consumer coconut bashing for decades.

Not even the adequate "MD prescription and treatment" in the chapter on "Coconut oil as medicine," which reported on the first clinical study by Filipino pharmacologist Dr. Gumadu Dayrit on the use of coconut oil in treating patients with the AIDS-causing human immunodeficiency virus, made the book an instant hit among Filipinos.

Then SARS—Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome—came along.

The use of virgin coconut oil against deadly viruses gained national attention as a former deputy when brought up by Dr. Dayrit's son, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit. But it was Fife's book that rescued Dayrit's study on the use of coconut oil against 100 Watts effects.

The wounded benefits of the coconut as food and as medicine have just started to pile up that they can no longer be ignored even by a skeptical medical profession.

The book contains what we already know as Solihin considers but which Western science never got to validate until recently. Today coconut oil is used in hospital formulas around the world to feed critically ill patients and is a major component of baby formulas.

Dr. Coconut in Manila

In the age of rising health challenges, it takes an American author to reawaken Filipinos, who have also doubted the wisdom of using their own produce, to the wonders of the tree of life they have to themselves.

Fife has taken his advocacy to the bottom-level. After "The Healing Miracles of Coconut Oil," he has written "The Coconut Lovers Cookbook," coming him the more-than "Dr. Coconut." He has also written 19 books on nutrition education.

"Dr. Coconut" will talk in a symposium and roundtable discussion during the International Food Exhibition on May 28 at the Phil El Trade Center complex. Local nutritionist and health practitioners will have an opportunity to clarify the medical research Fife mentions in his book in the morning symposium at the Philippine Trade and Training Center (PTTC).

The public may catch the author in a roundtable discussion in the afternoon at the exhibition factors hall.

Writer-teacher Anacleta Encarnacion passes away

ANNCLETA M. Encarnacion, educator, writer, literary critic, translator and Shakespeare scholar, died last Saturday in her hometown of San Pablo City, Laguna, of a lingering illness. She was 81.

Encarnacion is in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City, and will be cremated at a date to be announced soon.

She is survived by her brother Marcio Encarnacion and family; sister-in-law Lucrita Urbiztondo Encarnacion, and seven first cousins Gamo and family.

Encarnacion was the first dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and concurrent dean of the Graduate School of Arts, Sciences, Education and Nursing of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila. She taught at her alma mater, the Far Eastern University as well as in Polytechnic University of the Philippines and University of Santo Tomas.